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[RESCUED.]

## CECIL'S FORTUNE.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A BOARDING-HOUSE DINNER.

Many a beau without a shilling,  
Many an heiress not unwilling,  
Many a bargain if you strike it;  
This is London. How'd ye like it?

KEPPEL Street, Russell Square. There are some large houses in Keppel Street—houses with handsome window curtains and well-cleaned doorsteps, bright brass bell-handles and smartly turned knockers. Probably some rich people live in the street we are treating of; but our business lies with a couple named Watts, respectable, hard-working, and in the romantic sense quite uninteresting, who opened their house to the public by receiving boarders for whom they advertised in the "Daily Telegraph."

The dinner-hour was five at the Watts' Hotel, as some of the gentlemen boarders facetiously termed the boarding-house. We will say that the number was seven, although, of course, we do not mean to intimate that in naming that number we are pointing out any one house which stands in the somewhat dull, semi-genteel street at this present time. We repeat that the dinner-hour was five at number seven Keppel Street, and when our story opens the clock has just struck, and the hungry boarders are all assembled in the drawing-room, waiting eagerly for the tinkle of the

shrill-voiced bell that summonses them all to table.

The drawing-room was furnished in green—a faded green tapestry carpet, velvet chairs of the same tint, still more faded, and a few rather flimsy cabinets and tables. The curtains were green damask. There was a pier glass over the chimney-piece, and some popular engravings against the walls, amid which the "Last Appeal" and the "Choristers" figured very conspicuously. A small bright fire burnt in the low grate.

It was a keen, cold April afternoon, and the boarders gathered about the fire, talking on indifferent subjects. Most of these boarders belonged to the male sex: there was a bald, elderly gentleman from Kent who had brought his stout wife and rather dull-looking daughter up to see the London sights during the season; there were two Frenchmen, with sad, sallow, lean faces, black beards, and keen, restless eyes.

There were two young Englishmen, one a clerk in a bank, the other a clerk in a merchant's office; and there was a man at whom everyone looked and about whom everyone wondered, because nobody knew anything whatever about him. He was a tall, fair man, who must have been a resplendently handsome man in his youth, and even now, when on the wrong side of fifty, he was a striking fine-looking person, with a nameless air of fashion and superiority marking him out from the more commonplace people who surrounded him, despite the facts that his coat was threadbare and his boots were shabby.

Yet his voice was louder than the voices of any of the other hungry lodgers who were wait-

ing impatiently for their dinners. And now he raised it in complaint as he addressed Mr. Lawson, the bald gentleman from Kent who had come up to see the London theatres with his wife and daughter.

"What a horrible invention these third-rate London boarding-houses are," he said, with a bland smile. "Nothing is in time, nothing is properly cooked, and—" dropping his voice and glancing at the two clerks and the two foreigners, "what cads one is compelled to meet!"

The gentleman from Kent had made his money as a trunk maker in the City; his wife had been the daughter of a prosperous butcher in a country town. Mr. and Mrs. Lawson owned property to the extent of fifteen thousand pounds, which would one day descend to their only daughter Juliana.

Mr. Lawson was conscious of much weakness respecting his h's, which his wife dropped and he picked up in very wrong places, but he felt flattered at this fine gentleman, who was said to be cousin to half a dozen lords, choosing him out to condole with over the fact of being forced to endure the society of the "cads."

Mr. Lawson did not like poor clerks or black-bearded foreigners with sad, sallow faces, he was always afraid such people might wish to run away with Juliana in the hope of living at his expense for the present, and of gaining the reversion of the fifteen thousand pounds in the future. He had indeed seen Juliana exchange glances with one of the clerks, and he said, as he jingled his gold Albert:

"Well, you see, Mr.—"

"Renfrew," said the tall man, carelessly.

"You may have heard of my family? Old Sir Roderick Renfrew, M.P. for Westonshire?"

Mr. Lawson bowed and wondered if he dared ask so great a man to his pretty villa residence near Maidstone.

"You see, Mr. Renfrew, when I bring the missis—I mean Mrs. Lawson—up to London I am anxious to find a nice, quiet home for her; and in lodgings one is obliged to order one's dinner and so on, and this was recommended to me as a nice, quiet house."

"Quite so," Mr. Renfrew answered, and he gave his long, fierce moustache of mingled gold and silver a pull. "Quite so. Ah, there at last is the bell; now for something to eat. Heaven knows though whether we shall be able to eat it or not. Miss Lawson, may I have the honour?"

As he spoke he went forward and offered his arm to Juliana, who simpered a little and put her hand on the shabby coat sleeve of the faded fine gentleman. Mr. and Mrs. Lawson followed, and the young clerks and sallow foreigners brought up the rear.

The dinner was in reality abundant and fairly cooked. There was a roast sirloin and a couple of Dorking fowls, a fillet of veal, with ham, besides soup and fish at the commencement of the repast, and custards, tarts and puddings at the end, not to speak of cheese and celery.

A good plain dinner Mr. Lawson thought it in his heart, as did the clerks and the sallow foreigners, but still everyone found some fault with something; it is the privilege of boarders so to do. Mr. and Mrs. Watson were a worthy couple; Mrs. Watson was flushed, fussy and indiscreet; Mr. Watson, a city clerk, was pale, small, mild, and obedient to his wife. The couple were elderly.

Mr. Renfrew ate enormously. He had two helpings of everything, but he made scolding remarks all the time to Juliana Lawson respecting the electric forks, which were turning yellow through long use, the hideous pattern of the dinner service, the glare of gas, the ugliness of the gas-fittings, the wall-paper, and the faces of the two servant maids who waited at table.

Also he abused English cookery, but he said that Bass's ale was after all the best thing one could drink, and he suited the action to the word by drinking two bottles himself. Mr. Renfrew amused Juliana with an account of his foreign travels. He told her she had not lived until she had seen the churches, the pictures, the ruins of Italy, the theatres of Paris, and heard the music of Germany.

"I shall make papa take us this year," said Miss Lawson.

Mr. Renfrew pulled his moustache and wished that Juliana was not so stout, so short, and so stupid-looking.

"I could marry her in a week," he said to himself, "and have the old man for my banker."

For Mr. Alex Renfrew was still at fifty-four one of the vainest men in England.

"I wish he were not so old," said Juliana to herself.

And then she glanced over at the bank clerk, who was good-looking, young, poor, conceited, and looking out for a girl with money. When the wine which the boarders provided for themselves was put on the table, Mr. Renfrew poured out some for Juliana and said with a smile, which showed his white teeth, none of which were false:

"I hope some day to welcome you to Renfrew Manor."

"Renfrew Manor?" gasped Juliana. "That sounds like the name of a county seat."

"It is so. Renfrew Manor is in Cumberland. Sir Roderick—you must have heard of him, Conservative Member for Westmorland—is my father."

"Then you," gasped Julian, "some day soon—"

"I hope most sincerely some day to become Sir Alex Renfrew, and to welcome you to Renfrew Manor."

He did not add as its mistress with his lips, but he looked it with his eyes.

"Good gracious, if I thought I could really become a titled lady," said Juliana to herself, "I would marry him to-morrow."

The sallow, and-faced foreigners had not come to London to look out for heiresses; schemes deeper and wider were in their subtle brains, but they watched the proceedings of the other boarders as from a lofty attitude, and with cynical smiles on their hairy lips. And then the dinner came to an end and the ladies left the room.

Upstairs in the drawing-room Juliana threw herself into an armchair, stretched out her feet towards the fire, and said:

"That man must have been a darling when he was young. Fancy, ma, he is a baronet's son."

"What shabby clothes he wears," said Mrs. Lawson. "I should think he must have quarrelled with his father."

"But his father must be awfully old," said Juliana, "for of course he is old. He as good as asked me to marry him, but I should like the old man dead first."

Juliana was a short, fat girl, pale complexioned and puffy, and with very hard, small black eyes. She was not pleasant to look upon. At that moment came a rap on the front hall door.

"Good gracious," said Juliana, springing up. "Whoever can that be?"

She went to the glass to arrange her collar and the curls on her forehead. She heard the front door open and voices in the hall, and then the dining-room door opened and shut again.

"I am an atom until I know who has arrived," said Juliana to herself.

Then came the sound of footsteps on the stairs. The next moment the clerks, the sallow foreigners, and Mr. Lawson came pell-mell into the room.

"Where is Mr. Renfrew?" asked Juliana.

"His son has just arrived," said one of the foreigners, with a smile. "He is tall, fine. *Merci Dieu!* a splendid man. You will do right to guard well your heart, *mademoiselle*, from the young man."

Juliana's heart beat fast. She was always seeking conquests, and was fond of boasting that she "had not an atom of love in her," but she delighted in an army of admirers. She was quite resolved that when she did marry her husband should be what she called a perfect gentleman—one who could give her a higher social position than her plain, jog-trotting parents could ever aspire to.

"I wish he would come upstairs," she murmured.

But the evening wore on, and father and son remained in the dining-room. They did not even come up after the coffee that was served to them downstairs. There was a piano in the drawing-room, and Juliana opened it and played some showy pieces. The bank clerks praised her rapturously. Mr. and Mrs. Watts slumbered in their chairs. One of the clerks ventured to whisper to Juliana that he should be delighted to escort her to the theatre.

"Then, of course, my pa or ma must go also," said the young lady. "Besides, it's too late."

"But I have a box ticket, and there will be room for your mamma," said the clerk.

"And she will be asleep all the while," said Juliana. "Oh, no, thank you. I would rather not go. I am tired, and have a headache."

All the while she was listening to the subdued noises from below, wondering why Mr. Renfrew did not bring his son upstairs.

Father and son each sat on a leather-covered armchair in the rather shabby dining-room of No. 7. They were both smoking. On the table stood decanters of wine and spirits. The father had a large tumbler in which was brandy placed at the end of the mantelpiece, near which he sat. The son had a glass of light wine at his end of the mantelpiece.

There was not a striking likeness between the

two except that both were tall and graceful, and possessed that easy polish that is the consequence of high breeding. But the father had bright, restless blue eyes, while the son's were dark and dreamy in repose, daring, almost defiant, in the ordinary traffic with the busy world of every-day.

Perhaps, in spite of the enthusiastic praise lavished upon his personal appearance by the foreign gentleman, young Cecil Renfrew, strictly speaking, was not so handsome as his father had been in his youth. There was not quite the same classic outline of features. Cecil's mouth was at once firmer and sweeter than was Mr. Renfrew's, while his nose was broader at the base, and his complexion, naturally of a clear pallor, had become bronzed by exposure to warmer sunshine than that which visits these islands of Britain.

But his teeth were magnificent. The fire of his dark eyes lighted up his sombre face with a kind of splendour—one could have easily fancied that the light might become lurid when Cecil was angry. For the rest, he was gifted with that length of limb and symmetry of build which gives an idea of strength, durability, and manliness.

Cecil's face was a fine intellectual one, rather than a handsome one. In his youth the older Renfrew must have resembled the drollish waxen dummies in the head-dresser's windows, only that the cynical curl of his lip suggested more sinister thoughts than one usually associates with the mere fop.

Cecil's attire was a plain tweed travelling suit of dark brown. He was quite innocent of any ornaments in the shape of ring, chain, or jewelled pin. His hair was fine and white, and his whole air and mien expressed refinement without foppishness, self-reliance without presumption.

"And so you have come to London to seek your fortune?" said the father to the son.

"I have come to earn my living."

"Very ambitious," scoffed the elder Renfrew, "to be content with a living."

"I shall not be content," Cecil said, with a sad smile. "I am as ambitious as most men—more so, I think."

A silence fell between the two, and each went on smoking vigorously for some time. Mr. Renfrew drank his grog, arose, and made himself some more. Cecil watched his movements with a strange knitting of his dark level brows. At last he said:

"Father, did you succeed in that speculation—that Welsh mine affair?"

Mr. Renfrew wheeled round and looked his son straight in the eyes.

"Why do you ask?" he said.

"Because living here," looking round the room as he spoke, "living here in a London boarding-house must cost money."

"It would, my dear fellow," the elder gentleman answered, and he slapped his pockets as he spoke, "it would, under ordinary circumstances; but as it is it costs me not one farthing."

"How is that?" Cecil asked, sharply.

The elder man shrugged his shoulders.

"My receipt is very simple, dear boy," he said, with a cold smile. "I have nothing to pay with, and I do not pay, that is all."

"But you will have to pay. How much do you owe?"

Cecil spoke more sharply than before.

"I received my bill this morning," said Mr. Renfrew, calmly sipping his grog, and then having placed the tumbler on the mantelpiece, he sank again into the armchair. "I owe for a month's board, lodging, and laundress tea pounds exactly, and I have not tenpence in the whole wide world. I owe besides for wine and cigars; I find the young French wine merchant in Langham Place vastly accommodating. I only wish that I could discover a confiding tailor, for my clothes are becoming confoundingly seedy; but unfortunately I already owe such long bills to the worthy gentlemen of that persuasion, the tailoring and outfitting department, that I fear my name has travelled before



me to the West-end, and I can't endure the cut of tradesmen at the other end of the town."

Cecil's face darkened, and the light in his eyes grew lurid.

"But you mean to pay all this, father?"

His voice sounded calm and firm. There was not a trace of anger in his tones. Mr. Renfrew burst into a laugh.

"I shall never pay it unless your grandfather and your Uncle Maurice die and I become Sir Alexander Renfrew, owner of Renfrew Manor and the lands thereunto appertaining, worth in all some eighteen thousand pounds a year."

Cecil went on smoking in silence. His blood boiled in his veins; his proud, true heart was beating wildly; he could not trust himself to speak; he was afraid to trust himself to speak to this father of his, who was almost a stranger to him, but of whom he had always entertained the deadliest suspicions.

"You are shocked, my dear Cecil," said Mr. Renfrew—"shocked to hear your father speak the truth. Did you think, then, that I had discovered a gold mine in the back-yard of this Bloomsbury boarding-house, or that I had obtained a situation as clerk in the city, or that good Mrs. Watts, the landlady, was a widow, and I had married her? I assure you that if you have indulged in any of these pleasant dreams they must all dissolve—like the phantasmagoria which science conjures up at the Polytechnic. No, I have not one farthing. I trade on the family name, telling these good people the truth—that I am the son of Sir Roderick Renfrew, M.P. for Westmorland, and telling them also a falsehood that I am his heir, suppressing the interesting fact that I have a bachelor brother Maurice who is my elder by a year, and who hates me like poison, and you also, because I married the girl he loved."

"And broke her heart," said Cecil to himself.

"No," said Renfrew, throwing away the end of his cigar, and preparing to light another; "I have not the slightest intention of paying my bills. I have paid nothing for five years. I must, nevertheless, have money, and I want you to help me to make it; that's why I sent for you from your German college. I am going to start a new patent company, and I want you to be the secretary. I shall sell the shares at one hundred pounds each. A thousand shares will make our fortunes, my boy. I have already five fellows, excellent fellows, who have joined me. We want a little capital. Have you saved anything?"

"No; I have lived and paid for everything I have worn and eaten," the young man answered, bluntly.

"Then you have saved nothing?"

"I have ten pounds in the world," said Cecil.

"Just enough to pay good Mrs. Watts for my board," said Mr. Renfrew, with a laugh. "But I won't take that from you, my boy. No, I only want the use of your bright wits, your youthful energy, your daring ambition, for I know you are daring and ambitious, and will make your fortune. Will you be the secretary? Will you write the letters and organise the company?"

"And it is a genuine concern?" asked Cecil, again knitting his dark pencilled brows into a puzzled frown.

The elder man saw that his son was honest. "Honest as his fool of a young mother had been before him," so he said to himself, and he resolved to draw him into his great swindling scheme, and make him act in it in all good faith.

"For people will see how honest he is and how thoroughly he believes in the affair, and they will trust him," said he to himself.

Now, Cecil knew nothing of business, and though his wits were of the keenest, his intellect strong and subtle, as it had been devoted to books, he knew nothing of pounds, shillings, and pence.

Thus, when the father entered into a description of his plans for ripening whole crops by electricity the young man was interested in the scientific view of the question; his father was

cunning enough to dwell upon this. Cecil listened and wondered, and promised to study the subject. His father drew out a prospectus, and they talked of the company for about an hour, then the young man looked at his watch.

"I shall go out," he said, "and think of all you have told me and of the plans. Certainly if one had a fortune, if one were rich life would be better and brighter, and one might do more good."

He spoke aloud, he was only twenty-three. Young, enthusiastic, generous, full of ardent dreams, he found it impossible for a dozen reasons to love or respect his father, but he told himself that if that same father were rich instead of poor he might grow honest, honourable, and more to be respected.

Cecil put on his hat and overcoat and went out into the streets. He had come from a sea voyage that day, and he desired the refreshment of the open air. He knew nothing of London. The streets about Russell Square were quiet and dull. He wandered on and on under the silent stars in the clear spring night. Soon he was in the turmoil of Oxford Street, and he wondered at the noise and rush of the great city by night.

## CHAPTER II.

### LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

In the spring  
A young man's fancy  
Lightly turns to  
Thoughts of love.

TENNISON.

Cecil went on still further, and anon he came to a house glittering like a palace. The playbills outside showed him that he was near one of the principal theatres in London. We will call it the "Empress." The bills announced a new play called "Greed," and the name of the principal actor, Mountjoy, was one that was now taking not only the town but the world by storm.

"It must be nearly over," said Cecil, looking at his watch; "but still I should like to go in and see him and hear him, if only for five minutes."

He went in and took a ticket for the pit.

"I have heard so much of this Mountjoy, he must either be a great genius or else the luckiest fellow under the sun."

Cecil found his way to the pit. For some reason, that part of the house was not so closely packed as usual, and there was room in the third row for him; he took up his place. At that time there was an interval of ten minutes, and the drop scene was down.

The people in the gallery were talking and laughing, the ladies in the stalls were taking notes of each other's headgear and evening attire. The people in the boxes—what of them? Cecil Renfrew looked upwards casually towards the white lace caps, flirting fans, and gleaming jewels, and then he started as if struck by an electric shock; the beauty of the face he was looking at dazzled him, mystified him, filled him with a sudden, mad, fierce longing; it seemed to him that the beautiful girl was looking straight at him, a young man in the pit attired in a rough, brown tweed suit. Looking at him! Could it be possible? If so, perhaps she was mocking him, making fun of him. No, she was positively studying his face. He turned round boldly and studied hers in return. As he did so, while his eyes devoured every detail of her perfect figure and form, he became conscious of a certain cold, disappointed feeling: this divinity was not falling in love with him at first sight as he was with her. Nothing of the kind: she was steady, calm, and scrutinising. All at once she looked into a little book and he saw her fingers moving rapidly.

"She is, then, sketching," said Cecil to himself. "She is a young lady of artistic tastes. Ah, what a face, what superb intelligence, what a grand brow, though so young, and with those golden curls rippling over it. Who can she be? It would be sweet to die for such a woman,

sweeter still to live for her. What of a madman who swore to win her in spite of all the barriers that rank and fashion and the world's opinion raises between a queen of society and a poor youth with a doubtful father and mean antecedents, present poverty and a most uncertain future. Now, if the New Electric Light Agricultural Society should enable me to gather up a fortune of two millions, and if yonder syren with dark grey eyes, golden rippling curls, rose leaf cheeks, and sweet, proud, red lips were to lose her fortune and become poor, and if she married me for my wealth, and I found it out, I should drown myself."

The young lady wore richest crimson velvet and a white camellia in her golden hair, a necklace and cross of diamonds sparkled and burned and glowed with a million hues on her white breast. Her face was fresh and sweet as a rosebud with dainty features, but the dark grey eyes were keen and penetrating.

Cecil saw that they could flash with anger and scorn when occasion called forth those passions. The girl was slender and of haughty, erect bearing. Cecil was so absorbed in watching her that he did not notice the stern, fair, handsome face of a woman who sat by the side of the beauty. He did not see the look of cold surprise, too haughty to be called contempt, which the lady gave him.

The orchestra ceased playing the charming airs from "Hernani," which had seemed like the accompaniment to the thoughts of the already impassioned youth, and a loud clapping of hands greeted the entrance of Mountjoy the actor upon the fourth scene in this the fourth act of the play.

There was a splendid chamber fitted up with a royal magnificence. On a couch of purple velvet lay an old man dying, by his side knelt two persons—a beautiful girl and a man in the pride and glory of manhood. This man was Mountjoy the actor; in the piece he was called Cuthbert. The old man who was dying was the Earl of Cumbermere, his grandchild and heiress Celia he designed for the wife of Cuthbert, who was a distinguished cavalry officer.

The girl was a great heiress; Cuthbert was heavily in debt, the great actor Mountjoy had to perform the ungracious part of a man who, driven desperate by circumstances, feigns love, for and consents to marry a girl he does not love, but who loves him with her whole heart and soul.

All this time Cuthbert has a wife who adores him, and to whom he has given such selfish love as it is in his power to bestow. The part which the actor has to play between the ardent love of the two deceived women is a difficult and a delicate one, but although Cecil Renfrew had paid two of the few shillings he possessed for the privilege of seeing Mountjoy in the last act, he did not once look at the stage after the drawing up of the curtain and the great actor's first speech; his whole attention was absorbed by the stately young beauty in crimson velvet, with the snowy flower nestling amid her golden hair, and the diamond cross upon her breast.

It was a real genuine case of love at first sight. Whoever this girl was she had in reality with one glance of her dark grey eyes won a prize for which many women would barter a kingdom—the pure, strong love of a noble-hearted man.

Cecil had met with his fate. This was no love which would change with the passing years—no passion whose fire could be quenched by the icy coldness of disdain. Never would Cecil Renfrew love any other woman than the girl with the beautiful, pensive, proud eyes which were now occupied in the contemplation of Mountjoy the actor, and who had quite forgotten the existence of the young man in the brown tweed suit who sat in the pit, and whose sad, fine, earnest face she had been tempted to sketch in her pocket-book.

While Cecil dreamed his wild dream he watched the beautiful face up there in the opera box, and he saw it grow pale from sympathy and tears filled the earnest grey eyes.

"She can feel; she has a soul," he murmured. "Then she has a heart. Who will win it? I! Idiot, idiot! poor mad dreamer, and yet—"

There was a strong subtle scent of something burning somewhere! Where? The actors went on with their parts as if nothing had happened, and this fact went far towards quieting the audience for a time, but soon there arose murmurs.

The strong smell increased anon. There was heard an uproar of many voices which drowned completely the voices of the actors. Then came a trampling of feet, a sudden wild, frantic rush, and a cry of "Fire, fire, fire!" Then followed the appalling shrieks of women; the savage oaths of ruffians; the loud voices of the few wise men amid this babel of foolish ones who entreated the people to be calm, to sit down and wait and let the rush take place.

Few—very few followed this wise counsel, for the panic spread like wildfire, and the smell of fire was followed by volumes of smoke which burst out from the floor of the stage. The actors had disappeared; the smoke was followed by flames which ran along close to the now empty seats of the orchestra and threatened the pit.

And the beauty in the stage box? All the while Cecil saw her only, thought of her only, watched her only. She sat calm and still, very pale and very quiet. Now for the first time Cecil noticed the haughty fair woman in dead gold satin and opals set in heavy gold. She was something like the young beauty, though of larger build, and the expression of her eyes was totally different.

This magnificent person drew her fur cloak about her and spoke to the young girl rapidly. Anger and surprise were expressed on her proud face. She looked about as if seeking for help, and it seemed that there was no help near. In another moment Cecil was climbing like a squirrel up the post that supported the boxes. Another instant and he stood on the velvet pile carpet of the box close to his divinity. If she had been lovely at a distance she was divine seen face to face.

Cecil forgot everything—fire, danger, the fear of death, the pride of these dainty aristocrats, his own poor position, uncertain prospects, and dreary antecedents. He forgot all save that this lady was beautiful, and that he was close to her gazing into her eyes.

"Pardon me," he said, taking off his cap and bowing deeply. "I have dared to come to offer you help. My life is at your service."

"Help us, help us, young man!" said the elder lady, eagerly. "If you get us out safely to our carriage, the Earl of Belgrave will reward your services; he will give you ten pounds."

"Twenty, mother!" said the sweet voice of the young girl. "This is not a common person."

The blood rushed to the bronzed face of Cecil. He bowed his head silently, but the Countess of Belgrave ignored his emotion and her daughter's sensitive feelings. She plied her fan vigorously.

"How insufferably hot it is," she said. "They have found their way to the boxes—those dreadful creatures from the gallery, and the passages swarm with them. I opened the door just now; I dared not go out into that crowd. Tell me, young man, are we to be burnt to death here?"

"We must get away, Lady Belgrave," he answered, "for the fire comes from the stage, and the heat has now reached this box. If you would remain five minutes I would take Lady—"

"Lady Kate!" cried the countess, again plying her fan. "No, no, no, I will not allow you to take my daughter alone through that crowd. I will come if you will get me to my carriage, and then we will send the footman for Lady Kate."

"Yes, go," said Lady Kate; "I will remain here."

The flames had now wrapped the whole of the

back part of the stage in one sheet. The people were shrieking and trampling upon one another in the pit. There was an awful cracking sound over head. Death threatened Lady Kate Belgrave, but she sat as calmly as she had sat while Mountjoy, the actor, had been telling of his mimic sorrows on the stage.

Cecil, while he admired her courage, felt a little awed at the grandeur of this composure in so young and lovely and fragile a creature; he thought it hardly seemed natural. Cecil looked at her, and his heart beat to suffocation as he said:

"No, Lady Kate, you must not remain."

She looked up at him, a bright surprised glance, with actually the shadow of a smile flitting about the lovely mouth.

"If we are to die," she said, "it is, I suppose, a choice of deaths. Is it to be the flames or the trampling of the crowd? They are both awful. I think I prefer the crowd; and yet—no."

She arose as she spoke and linked her arm in Cecil's. At the contact his soul seemed to faint with ecstasy; it was a moment of madness; it seemed to this headlong lover that danger, torture, death itself were not too much to suffer in exchange for the bliss of encircling this peerless Kate with his arm.

"Come," he said, "I can only take one at a time. Madame," to Lady Belgrave, "remain here ten minutes. I promise to return for you."

Then he lifted Lady Kate from the ground and pushed his way out into the crowd which thronged the passage; and then all at once came a joyful shout from the excited crowd:

"The engines—the fire engines; we are saved! Don't push!"

And the crowd stood still like one man. There came a splashing sound of water on the roof anon, and the whole place was wrapped in total darkness. The rush of water had extinguished the flames; the smell was awful; the gas had been turned suddenly off at the meter. Lady Kate had the heart of a hero, but she was only a delicate girl.

Cecil felt from the dead weight in his arms that she had fainted. Her head was on his shoulder; her lovely soft cheek rested against his own. He knew she could not hear him, but for that very reason he ventured to whisper words of adoring devotion in her ear.

"You can be nothing to me save a distant star," he said, "but I—I shall always—always worship you from a distance. You will be my queen, my divinity as long as I tread the earth."

Then all at once came light again into the building. The gas was turned on again. It had after all only been lowered so as to reduce the heat in the building. The fire was out, and the crowd went out slowly into the street. Cecil had the instinctive feeling that he must get Lady Kate to the air. He carried her as easily now as if he had been a child. Soon the cold night wind of the English spring was fanning his hot brow. Lady Kate still rested unconscious in his arms, and it was past midnight, and he stood in the Strand.

(To be Continued.)

## SCIENCE.

### AN INTERNATIONAL LEATHER SHOW.

AN International Exhibition of leather and leather goods, furs and pelts, tanner's materials, shoe and leather machinery, and the like, is contemplated from May to November, 1881, at Frankfort-on-the-Main. The circular of the provisional committee states, that this exhibition is intended to bring together from all parts of the world all the different raw materials, and to show in successive stages the manner and means of their being manufactured and adapted to the wants of man. It will show how art and science and labour and capital have been constantly and quietly working for the advancement of civilisation in this industry, fully as

much as in any other. Frankfort-on-the-Main has been selected as the central city of Germany, and a committee composed of prominent men in the principal industries, with men of science and art, will do all they can to make it a most complete and successful exhibition.

## ONIONS.

FROM our own experience, and the observation of others, we can fully endorse on the healthful properties of the above esculent. Lung and liver complaints are certainly benefited, often cured, by a free consumption of onions; either cooked or raw. Colds yield to them like magic. Don't be afraid of them. Taken at night all offence will be wanting by morning, and the good effects will amply compensate for the trifling annoyance. Taken regularly they greatly promote the health of the lungs and the digestive organs. An extract made by boiling down the juice of onions to a syrup, and taken as a medicine, answers the purpose very well, but fried, roasted, or boiled, onions are better. Onions are a very cheap medicine, within everybody's reach, and they are not by any means as "bad to take" as the costly nostrums a neglect of their use may necessitate.

### HOUSEHOLD WATER MOTOR.

IN Zurich, Switzerland, the use of a portable water power, so to speak, is being extensively used for household purposes. Firewood, for example, is to be sawn into convenient lengths for burning. A small sawing machine on wheels is drawn by two men to the front of a house. They connect by a flexible tube with the nearest hydrant; the water flows to the machine; the saw dances, and cuts up the wood with surprising rapidity. A portable turbine has also been invented, and employed in many places in the same city, in driving a Gramme machine for the production of electric light. Water is very abundant in Zurich; but there are other towns in which this domestic power could be advantageously introduced. Where it is any object to keep a record of the water used an indicator showing the quantity might be affixed to the machine.

At the sale of the great collection of Prince Demidoff at San Donato, Florence, Americans were among the principal purchasers. The pictures sold on the first three days realised about £100,000.

MISS NIXON, the actress, will be worth a quarter of a million at the end of her theatrical tour. It is estimated that she will make £13,000 out of her present engagement. She invests every dollar she makes in the United States in American securities. When she was in Buffalo, she walked into a bank and bought nearly £3,000 worth of 4 per cents. Then she hurried over to the telegraph office and secured by telegraph a £1,000 lot of Erie seconds. These, with her usual luck, rose 4 per cent. within ten days after the purchase, and she hastened to purchase a second lot.

THE birth rate in France is steadily diminishing; so is that of marriage, but in a lesser degree, the number of children resulting from these marriages having greatly declined. In the class composed of petty tradesmen or the well-to-do peasants there is seldom more than one child per marriage, and M. Baudrillart has stated that in one of the rural communes in Picardy he ascertained the number of children among the best-off of the peasants to be thirty-seven for thirty-five families. What is to be the ultimate destiny of France if this decline of the population keeps on increasing?

THE ST. GOTTHARD TUNNEL.—From the beginning of the work up to December the number of workmen killed was 106, and that of the seriously injured about 300. Further, up to the 28th of February last, when the wall between the two tunnels was pierced, the casualties had amounted to 150 killed, and 400 disabled.





[AN EARLY VISITOR.]

## LOST THROUGH GOLD; OR, A BEAUTIFUL SINNER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Frank Bertram's Wife," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c.*

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## THE TRIAL.

There was silence deep as death;  
And the boldest held his breath,  
For a time.

CAMPELLE.

TIME which waits for no one, respects no person, however great, moved onwards until March itself arrived and the day appointed for Alice Tracy's trial drew nearer. Some changes had taken place. Lady Aston still remained at The Manor in the deepest seclusion, seeing no one, and apparently taking no part in the events that went on around her.

George Arnold once more indulged in bachelor loneliness at Trent Park, for Mademoiselle Gruet had been united to the doctor and her two little pupils lived with her at the gaunt, red-brick house, where the doctor had resided for nearly forty years.

It was the best possible arrangement. Until after the trial Mr. Arnold's time was fully taken up with seeking every possible and impossible clue to the real murderer of the Earl of Aston, and Dorothea pointed out to him that the little countess and her sister could hardly stay with her at the "Royal James."

Dorothea Hardy had never returned to her home since she left it with the barrister and Alice on the winter's night we know of. Never once had she thought of doing so. She could

not bear to leave Halsted while Alice Tracy's fate trembled in the balance.

She fondly hoped that when once the twelfth of March was passed her friend would be free, and they could both go back together to the pretty Kentish village. She heard sometimes from Duke Hardy. Mere business letters, respecting Miss Tracy, or information respecting her own property. Very dry, uninteresting letters, but yet Mrs. Hardy treasured them up carefully and read them until she knew them by heart.

Rumour was very busy with Duke's name. Two celebrated cases, which he had defended, had covered him with honour. Dora never mentioned them in her brief replies to his letters, never alluded to his success, and yet she studied the newspapers, which told of it, greedily, and gloated over his triumph almost as though it had been her own.

Perhaps the northern winter was unusually trying, perhaps the anxiety she had undergone told on her; but certainly, as March went on, Dora grew to look far from well. The slight figure grew thinner still. The creamy whiteness of the skin contrasted yet more with the deep blue veins on the forehead, and the unnatural brightness of the clear eyes told of an excitement deep and lasting.

Alice, despite all the rigour of prison life, despite the knowledge that her fate hung on the balance, that it was a chance if her days were not numbered, looked really far less ill than her friend.

"I wish," said the prisoner, on one of the early March days when Mrs. Hardy came to see her, "I wish, Dora, you would go back to Keston."

"Are you tired of me?"

"I think I and my troubles are just wearing you out. You look like a shadow, Dora."

"I never was plump, Alice, never in all my life. I'm a very substantial shadow, I can assure you."

Alice sighed.

"I wish Mr. Hardy was here."

"Why? Do you think the sight of him would fatten me up? I can assure you it wouldn't. Why, Alice, the amount of quarrelling I should have to do would wear me to a threadpaper."

"I think Mr. Hardy would make you go home."

"No one ever made me do anything I did not like yet, Alice. I have always had my own way."

"Do you really mean to come to Edinburgh?"

"Most decidedly. I intend to take you back with me in triumph to Keston."

Alice gently disregarded this speech, as she had disregarded many similar ones. She never, if she could help it, made any allusion to what might happen after the twelfth of March. That day seemed the boundary of her life. She would think of nothing, speak of nothing, that might come to pass afterwards.

"Fancy," said Dora, simply, "it's only just three months since I first saw you. Do you remember the fancy portrait you drew of me, Alice? An old lady with grey hair, perpetually dropping the stitches in her knitting, and requiring the bible to be read to her with Spartan like precision every day of her life."

"It was far enough from true, Dora. Have you seen the children lately?"

"They were with me yesterday, Alice. Do you know little Adela is to be called as a witness? We look to her to do great things for you."

"Poor little things," thinking of the children she had loved so well. "I am glad they have Mr. Arnold to take care of them."

Just one week later, at the Spring Assizes, the trial, which so many anxious hearts had been dreading, so many fears had been expended on, actually took place. Alice Duncan Tracy stood in the dock to answer before a jury of her fellow countrymen to the charge of taking the life of her nearest relative, Francis Earl of Aston.

None of those interested in her fate will ever forget that day. It was a lovely morning in

early spring, the sun shone so bright that it seemed to Dorothea almost a mockery on the awful suspense they were in.

She rose early after an almost sleepless night, and was trying vainly to eat the breakfast sent up to her, when the sitting-room door opened, and Duke Hardy entered as calmly as if he had parted from her yesterday.

"You here?" she exclaimed, forgetting all politeness in her surprise. "Why, I thought you were in London."

"I was till yesterday. I have just come over to see how this case goes. It's a fine question for any jury to try, so I thought I'd just come and see how matters went. I met Mr. Guy a minute ago, and he told me you were here. You came up yesterday, I suppose?"

"Yes, yesterday."

"There's quite a gathering from Halsted. Arnold and the little countess at the Royal, my lady and her maid somewhere else, and the doctor and the French governess at a third establishment."

"She's his wife now," murmured Dorothea, thinking this expression funny.

"Ah, yes. I never remember anything about marriages. You look absolutely ill, by the way."

"I shall be well enough after to-morrow. Home will be very pleasant after all my wanderings."

The barrister took out his watch.

"I suppose you had better be starting. One thing, we remember of our witnesses, so we can sit comfortably down in one spot and not trouble to move ourselves."

The court was nearly crowded when they arrived. Duke found Mrs. Hardy somewhat ill at ease, and then strolled off to seek Mr. Guy. Dora, feeling as though she should feel better, at that moment, staided her nerves as best she could, and struggled hard to feel happy, though in very truth she had never before felt the odds so terribly against her wishes.

She listened as in a dream to the speech of the prosecuting counsel. It seemed to her that every word he said must seal Alice's doom. After listening to him, how could the jury find her innocent?

Step by step he seemed to pile up her guilt. Every shade of suspicion was carefully turned to account; every doubtful circumstance enlarged upon. It came to Dorothea to wonder how any man could be so cruel as this grave barrister in his wig and gown. She felt as though she hated him from the bottom of her heart.

She felt easier when he sat down. There was just this difference between his speech and the testimony of his witnesses—the latter would be subjected to a searching cross-examination, while the learned gentleman could not.

The case for the prosecution was little altered from what it had been at that preliminary examination before Bailie Macdonald at Halsted. Not a single extra witness was called. Mr. Guy worked bravely. Apart from the natural sympathy he felt for a young and beautiful client, he was well aware of the glory success would bring him.

The general opinion of the outside world was that the case was hopeless. If he "got the prisoner off," his fame as an advocate would spread through the length and breadth of Scotland. With Doctor Brown he had an easy task. Called by the prosecution, the old surgeon's heart leaned entirely to the prisoner.

He was only too glad to be able to admit the time that elapsed between his verdict that the earl had died of poison and the finding of the arsenic in Miss Tracy's room. Had there been time for anyone to place the arsenic where it was found? Yes most decidedly; nearly an hour elapsed.

He was in the library with the door shut; the governess and the housekeeper were there too; the children were in the schoolroom. No one else could possibly have seen the staircase and who went up or down. The schoolroom door was just by the staircase. If it was wide open anyone there could see the whole of the

first flight, and even the door of Miss Tracy's room.

This was all Mr. Guy wanted. The doctor stepped down feeling very much relieved that his task was over. He was followed by his wife. Mrs. Brown, in her rapid broken English, told very much the same story. She enlarged on it rather. She had ready wit, and while she seemed only to answer the questions put to her, she yet managed to convey the information that she knew of Miss Tracy's departure more than a week beforehand, and the young lady went because the Manor was "one place of torture" to her.

Dorothea drew a deep breath of relief. She saw that the lively Frenchwoman had at least gained the sympathy of her audience and the worst blot on Alice's case—the fact of her running away the very day of Lord Astor's death—was, at least, satisfactorily explained.

Lady Aston came next. Mr. Guy prepared himself for a battle when he saw the defiant anger of her beautiful face. Her evidence was widely different from that of her predecessors. Every point was enlarged upon and dwelt upon, and from cross-examination very little was elicited.

She admitted that the earl had not seemed well in London, but declared he had been much better subsequently. She found the arsenic as described by Dr. Brown. Miss Tracy often went out alone. She was liberally supplied with pocket money, and could have bought anything required.

The afternoon before his death her husband was alone with the prisoner for more than two hours; she was not leaving with the children. He looked much better on her return, and she remarked it to the prisoner, who looked confused.

In short, his daughter, Countess of Aston, was the prop and mainstay of the prosecution, and the most trying witness it had ever fallen to Mr. Guy's lot to cross-examine. It appeared to the young advocate she turned all his questions against himself. It was a real relief to him when she left the box and the court adjourned for luncheon.

On their return the case for the defence opened. In clear, ringing tones, full of earnestness, inspired by belief in his client's innocence, and pity for her sufferings, Mr. Guy addressed the court. He never attempted to deny that appearances were strong against his client, but he urged the whole case was one of circumstantial evidence, and there was absolutely no proof of her guilt.

The witnesses for the prosecution had already in cross-examination explained the two most damaging points in her case—her leaving Aston Manor and the finding of the arsenic in her room. They had already heard on the testimony of such a witness as the lady the earl himself had chosen as the governess of his children, that Miss Tracy had planned for weeks to leave the Manor, that her life in that luxurious home had become one long torture to her, while the gentleman who had been medical attendant to the Astons for more than thirty years told them ample time elapsed for any member of the household to clear themselves of suspicion by placing the paper of poison in his unhappy client's room.

"Many," went on the young advocate, "would urge the theory of suicide, I do not. Lord Astor came of a brave, loyal race, he was not likely to attempt the life all men honoured. The poor nobleman was cruelly done to death in his own home by a member of his own household, but just as surely not by my client. Lord Astor's health began to fail in the spring when he was in London and Miss Tracy hundreds of miles away at Aston Manor: this one fact alone proclaims her innocent."

He ceased, and the first witness for the defence was called, Adela, Countess of Aston. Every eye in court was strained to look at the little peeress, and as the child herself glanced for one moment at the sea of faces she caught sight of Mrs. Hardy and smiled at her, then the little face grew very grave, and she turned to her

questioner with a solemn look which showed she knew how important was her role.

She gave her name and age and answered that she knew the nature of an oath; there was some opposition on the part of the counsel for the prosecution, but the judge overruled it, and she was sworn. Those in court noticed the reverent way in which she kissed the testament handed to her, and one rough man whispered to another:

"I'd rather believe the little lass than any of 'em."

The little lass held herself bravely; in her clear, childish voice she answered all the questions put to her.

"She and I were alone in the schoolroom while the doctor was in the library, and they opened the door because they felt so frightened; they saw mamma come downstairs with a light, she came out of Alice's room—oh, yes, she was quite sure. Alice's door was the only one you could see from the schoolroom; she knew mamma went in."

A murmur rose in the crowd which was instantly put down.

"There was no chemist's shop near Aston, not within a walk; Alice never went out in the carriage alone. Oh, never; mamma would not let her, she liked the carriage for herself."

An amused smile came on two faces, but the child countess was unconscious of it; she went on as simply as though she had been saying a lesson to Mademoiselle—we mean Mrs. Brown.

"They had lost a sum book, oh, yes, for more than a week; it was found one day in mamma's boudoir; they could not think how it got there; they never took their books to mamma's rooms, never. Mamma did not venture to take them down again, she would get her mother; but she liked this best because it was like 'True' as that when they looked at it three pages had been cut out near the end—three whole pages had quite gone. It spoiled the book. They had not got the book now; Cousin George took it away."

The book was produced here, and handed to the jury. The three pages had been cut out with a penknife, the leaves exactly matched in quality and tint; the paper in which the arsenic had been discovered; that, too, had been cut by hand, not as is usual in chemist's paper—by machinery.

A deep silence had gathered over the court, no sound disturbed the stillness. All eyes were on the child whose testimony seemed likely to change the whole course of events. Of course she was cross-examined, and hardly, too, but she stood it well.

"She had told the truth; she knew they said Alice had killed papa. She did not remember about the sum book to save Alice, she remembered it because it was so strange. She was sure mamma came out of Alice's room; why she recollected so well was that mamma looked very, very angry, and she thought she had been crying. Alice never went into mamma's boudoir, never once that she could remember."

No other witness was called for the defence. The counsel for the prosecution replied briefly. He contended that nothing had shaken his case. The young countess was precocious, but her sympathies were so evidently with her cousin, she could not be relied on; no doubt she meant to say nothing, but the truth—at all, they must remember she had looked on the prisoner all her life as an elder sister, while, for the dowager countess, she evidently had the dislike all step-mothers seem destined to encounter.

The judge summed up so impartially and fairly that Dorothea was at a loss to know whether he thought Alice Tracy guilty or innocent.

"The whole case," concluded his lordship, "hangs upon one question—is there proof that Alice Tracy had the power to procure arsenic, and, having the power, procured it and administered it? If you believe the testimony of the Countess Adela you are bound to find her not guilty. You have heard the exception taken by the prosecution to this evidence. If you believe the countess too young to clearly understand the question at stake, and dismiss her



testimony entirely, you must yet remember the admissions made by Dr. and Mrs. Brown in their evidence. You must weigh well, also, the evidence of the murdered man's widow, which is the chief proof against the prisoner."

The jury retired to consider their verdict, and an awful suspense ensued. The crowded court, weary of the silence they had kept so long, talked together, and eagerly discussed the probable verdict; bets were freely taken on the result of the jury's deliberations. Dorothea drew down her veil and wondered how people could be so heartless; then, when her suspense became agonising, a hand was laid on her arm.

"They are coming in now," said Duke Hardy. "I did not want you to be alone when the verdict was given."

And even as he spoke a stir arose and the twelve "faithful men and true" returned to their posts, and a deep hush of expectation gathered on the Court.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

## A WASTED LIFE.

A maiden withering on the stalk.

WORDSWORTH.

TIME had not passed without changes at Keston during the three months of Mrs. Hardy's absence. Whether James Carden was moved by a feeling of involuntary admiration for the woman who refused him and dared him fearlessly to do his worst, or whether his revenge was satisfied by the trouble he had brought upon her friend, we know not, but certainly he did not fulfil the threat he had uttered on that Sunday afternoon.

He never spread the rumour in Keston that dainty and high-bred as she was, Dorothea had had to work hard for her own living before she became Mrs. Raymond Hardy. It caused a nine days wonder at Keston, the sudden disappearance of the young widow.

Of course the truth was soon found out. The pretty girl who had come to be Mrs. Hardy's companion was no other than the suspected murderess of the Earl of Aston. Keston pricked up its ears. There was a spice of romantic horror about the affair which was most savoury to the inhabitants.

Most contented themselves with observing, "Dear Mrs. Hardy was so peculiar. It would hardly do just yet to pronounce open censure. If Alice Tracy were acquitted and returned to The Grange as a visitor, it would be desirable to be on friendly terms with the earl's cousin, so the ladies of Keston were very lenient, and waited patiently to form their verdict until they had heard that of the Scottish jury.

The old ladies at the Ivy House perhaps took a keener interest in the case than other people. Miss Susan and Miss Jemima had been so long accustomed to fill their heads with their neighbour's affairs that they thoroughly enjoyed this tit-bit of gossip.

"I always thought Mrs. Hardy would do something eccentric some day," declared Jemima, as they sat at dinner about a week after that chance meeting with Alice at the picture gallery, and it was known for a fact that she had been committed for trial.

James knitted his brow, but said nothing. There was no subject he more desired to avoid than that of Mrs. Hardy. His sisters did not understand his silence. The subject had great charms for them. Why should he object to it?

"From the first moment I saw Miss Duncan in the train I felt something was wrong," declared Miss Susan, triumphantly. "She was much too pretty to travel alone."

"I hope Mrs. Hardy won't come back," returned the family baby in the childish manner she so delighted in. "People say they actually took her to prison first instead of Miss Tracy. I'm sure I should be afraid to speak to her," with a childish giggle; "I couldn't bear to go and see her."

"She is not likely to ask you," retorted the master of the house, drily.

"Mrs. Hardy nice girl," put in Arty, with a tender remembrance of the dainty tea-table at The Grange; "her seed cake do Arty great deal of good; he feel much better."

Miss Jemima passed him some cake that happened to be on the table, trusting that present delicacies would banish the thoughts of past pleasures. Ela sipped her port wine meditatively; her sisters tried to make signs to her to make haste. They understood James better than she did, and foresaw a storm was coming. But alas! the "little one" was too intent upon her dessert to understand their frantic efforts. She was quite five minutes before she had finished, then it was a hard task to detach Arty from the seed cake.

At last, proud and triumphant, Miss Jemima had piloted her flock to the door on their retreat to the drawing-room, when she was peremptorily called back.

"Don't go, Jemima, I want to talk to you and Susan."

The little old ladies with their snuff-coloured silk dresses trotted meekly back and resumed their seats on different sides of the table. James was very clever—a brother to be proud of and respected, but the two simple old souls often wished in their hearts, though they would not have dared to give utterance to such a sentiment, that he had a few less brains and a little more feeling. James Carden did not keep them long waiting; he was a man prompt to make up his mind.

"A little while ago," he began, coldly, "I explained to you that I wished our establishment here to be broken up. Have you made any plans?"

"No, we haven't," burst out Susan, forgetting her fear of him in genuine indignation.

"We didn't think," echoed Miss Jemima, dolefully, "you'd have the heart to turn us out, two lone women with those poor dear children on our hands."

"And to separate the furniture," groaned Susan, "the mahogany that our mother always had rubbed up with beeswax twice a week."

"And thought of when she was dying," tragically from Jemima.

Mr. Carden got up and stood with his back to the fire.

"It is no use taking this tone," he said, gravely. "Because we have lived together for a good many years is no reason we should go on doing so until we die."

"I think it is," bravely from Jemima.

"And so do I!" echoed her sister.

"Well, I do not," asserted their brother. "I hate Keston. I am sick to death of the place and the people in it, and the sooner I can get away the better I shall be pleased."

"I thought you meant to marry and settle here."

"I may marry, I shall never settle here; the house is mine and I want it. You've not made it such a very pleasant place to me with the ridiculous way you've gone on. You have made us the laughing stock of the parish for years past."

"That I'm sure we've not," declared both spinsters in chorus. "We are respected by high and low. Everyone for miles round asks us out to tea, and comes round here to hear the news."

"And laughs at you well afterwards. Well, I can't help it, you must believe me or not, as you like. I only tell you that in a fortnight's time I shall place the house in an agent's hands to be sold by auction for just what it will fetch."

Jemima was sobbing bitterly. Susan was too indignant.

"The beds our father died on, and the linen my mother hemmed with her own fingers? I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself, James Carden."

Perhaps her words awoke a kinder feeling.

"Anything you or Jemima fancy you can take away. When I spoke of the house being sold I did not mean the furniture. You may have the whole of that, if you like, and welcome."

They went sorrowfully to the drawing-room. Arty and Ela were playing cats' cradle, and the

two poor old maids decided not to break the news to them that night.

"I feel I shall never live to go away," breathed Jemima, as she said good-night to her double. "I can't fancy living anywhere but here at the Ivy House."

Poor old lady! Her heart had withered and narrowed as years went on, but it contained two or three strong affections yet. No place could be so dear to her as this old homestead; no life so pleasant as that she lived here with her brothers and sisters. For the first time for years she did not get up to breakfast the next morning.

"I'm not ill, child," she said, when Ela brought up a cup of weak tea, and she seemed full of consternation at "sister" being still in bed. "I'm not ill, but I'm tired. I don't feel as if I could get up."

And all through that winter's day the busy housekeeper lay there quietly, silently. The blow had fallen on her heavily. To talk of taking her from the Ivy House was like talking of pulling up an old tree by its roots. Jemima was too old to travel. In the dusk Susan came in with Dr. Jinks, the medical authority of the neighbourhood.

"I am not ill, only tired," said the old maid, deprecatingly. "Susan should not have troubled you."

"What I say, doctor," declared Susan, stiffly, "is she must be ill to keep her bed. Not once has she done it in my memory since we were all down with the chicken-pox."

Dr. Jinks hazarded no opinion. He put a few simple medical questions, talked cheerfully, and lingered twenty minutes, then he took his leave, and Susan followed him downstairs.

"It's the fever," he said, in answer to her questions. "The weather has been so mild lately there's been a great deal of typhus about. But this is the first case I've had."

"Will it be a long illness?" blurted out the truth. "My brother wishes to sell the house, and he said we must be ready in a fortnight."

"My dear lady, it is an impossibility," returned the man of physic. "Everything must give way to illness. Miss Carden ought not to leave her bed for more than three weeks."

But she did leave it barely a week from the day she had cried at the thoughts of leaving the Ivy House. They carried her out of her old home and laid her down to rest for ever, free from all care or sorrow in a shady corner of God's acre.

Plain, peculiar, and uninteresting. An old maid, I grant it, but her whole life had been a sacrifice to other people. But for Ela and Arthur, Jemima Carden might have died an honoured wife, wept by a fond husband and loving children. She had devoted her life to the two younger ones.

There was a long discussion after the funeral. James Carden, more moved than he cared to show, revoked all he had said about leaving the Ivy House, and told his sister he would never ask her to give it up. But poor Susan without her double was just as ready to go as she had previously been anxious to stay.

She could no more reign at the Ivy House in Jemima's stead than she could have taken the lost one's snuff-coloured silk dress and worn it instead of her own. Both acts would have seemed to her an equal wickedness. She told James this, and added that Dr. Jinks was of opinion that Ela must travel for a time.

"She is too upset, James. She must have change, and there is no one to take her but me."

"Arthur," suggested the lawyer, gravely. "He cannot travel, Susan, it is impossible."

"Yes," sadly. "I feel torn in pieces; but Dr. Jinks thinks three months change may make another creature of Ela. My duty seems to her. James, don't you think some family would take care of Arty while we are away. I dread parting from him, but it seems the only plan. We have plenty of money, and if the pay was good we might depend on his being kindly treated."

The result was that an advertisement was inserted in most of the London papers, and in due

time replies flocked in, among them from a lady who only received four boarders, all of them a little "peculiar," and who gave to each undivided attention. Most reliable references having been furnished, poor Arthur was delivered over to the care of Mrs. Dean, early in February, and Susan and Ela set out on their travels.

(To be Continued.)

## COUNTRY INNS.

The old country inn is no more; but how charming the picture which still lingers in our imagination of its hearty hospitality and jovial landlord. There was a hearty profusion everywhere about the house, and the very atmosphere was redolent of sumptuous living. The juiciest of joints were turning and the plumpest of poultry basting before the roaring fire in the spacious kitchen; for that was before people had taken to economising their fuel, and patent cooking-ranges were still undreamed of. Post-boys in travel-stained attire were seated behind mighty barons and sirloins, at which they might cut and come again; while guards and coachmen off duty for the time were hobnobbing over foaming tankards. In those happy days for the landlords and their customers, beef and mutton were comparatively cheap; and very likely the host brewed his own ale, priding himself on the "strike" and quality.

Whole barrels were consumed in a wonderfully short space of time. There was a perpetual cracking of whips and rumbling of wheels under the archway that led to the ample stable-yard; the consumption of hay and oats was so great that a clerk was required to check off the accounts, and every now and then came a rush of customers when some flying stage-coach pulled up at the door. The passengers were supposed to breakfast or dine, as the case might be, and exceedingly liberal provision was prepared for them. There was kidneys, sausages, chops, steaks, ham, eggs and toast. The sideboard groaned under its weight of substantial. Frequently the landlord had as sound port in the cellar as the neighbouring squire; and if the host had an invitation to sit down with his guest he would take care to fetch the bottle from the bin in the corner.

As a rule he was by no means bad company. He was on excellent terms with the rector and squire, and hand and glove with the lawyer and doctor. He knew something of everybody up and down the road, and heard all the gossip of the neighbouring counties. After "cracking a bottle" or so, and an evening of social intercourse, you were placed thenceforward on the footing of a friend of the house, and might be sure that your tastes and wishes would be anticipated. And when the parting guest came to settle the score, he took his leave among the smiles of the establishment, and felt that he had had value for his money.

## THE FATE OF BEGGARS.

AFTER the Reformation, stern measures were adopted by Edward VI. of England for the repression of beggars. A statute was passed enacting that any person who lived idly for three days might be brought before the justices of the peace, marked with a hot iron, and made the slave of him who brought him for three years. Other equally rigorous laws were made. Some excuse may be found in the fact that at this time the "sturdy beggars" were becoming a danger to the rest of the community. The roads were infested with bands of men nominally mendicants, really plunderers. The beggars were no longer picturesque but troublesome, and were summarily dealt with.

Later on the press-gang came down on them. Statutes less cruel than those of the Tudors, but inconvenient to the professional beggar inas-

much as they forced work—the thing he most loathed—upon him, were enacted, and in these days, with all our innumerable charities, the professional mendicant is looked down upon and assisted grudgingly, with qualms of conscience, even by the tender-hearted. Beggars fared better in Scotland. There, up to the present century, the licensed "blue gown" was permitted to make his regular rounds, secure from molestation by the most zealous of constables. He received annually a blue coat or cloak of coarse blue cloth, to the arm of which was affixed the pewter badge which conferred on him the privilege of asking alms throughout Scotland, also a purse containing as many pennies as the reigning sovereign was years old. Indeed, all beggars, licensed and unlicensed, are treated with tolerable kindness north of the Tweed.

## FACETIÆ.

### PEOPLE I HATE.

The man who insists upon having his hair cut, curled and brushed, and having himself generally oiled, washed and shampooed while I am waiting to be shaved.

The old lady who, when I am only just in time to get my ticket for the express, wants change for a ten-pound note of the clerk, and holds a long conversation with him about the weather, and wants to know if the Stickbury bus meets the 2.35 at Smugglup Junction.

The "picture-doe" who gives himself the airs of a fine-art critic.

Servants who tell you their master has "only gone out half a minute ago," and who wonder that "you didn't meet him."

Brutes who read newspapers aloud in railway carriages.

Idiots who persist in singing a "rum-tum" accompaniment of their own to every solo in an opera.

The fisherman who tells me that "the party as come here yesterday had rare sport, to be sure."

The consolatory donkey who tells me after I have had some misfortune or disappointment that "it will be all the same a hundred years hence."

The "journalistic farmer" who poses as a celebrated man of letters.

People who ask my advice, take up my time, and then act in a diametrically opposite way to my counsel.

People who give me advice gratis, which I don't take, and then, when I come to grief, say, "I told you so."

People who send me "original" contributions for "Judy," and forward them to half-a-dozen other papers by the same post.

The snob who was once in the same room with a duke, and ever afterwards persists in beginning sentences, "As the Duke of Daggleton said—" or "When I met the Duke of Daggleton at—"

—Judy.

### A BIOGRAPHY OF HARTMANN.

THE papers lately have been publishing biographies of Hartmann, all of which are more or less inaccurate. We have therefore all the more pleasure in giving publicity to the following version, which has been sent to us by the inspired organ of St. Petersburg, the "Novawitschkoff," and which may be relied upon as absolutely correct:

"The first we hear of Albert Hartmann is at his school, where he displayed an almost diabolical precocity in getting his companions blown up, coming off himself quite scatheless. He had a great fancy for triggonometry, and at an early age experimented with explosive compounds, which somehow never would detonate at the right time—a fact which led him to believe he was invulnerable, and would never be able to discharge the debt o' natur."

"On leaving school he occupied several situations, but being of a roving and restless disposition, he was perpetually putting on his cap

and going off. With such uncertain aims, he soon became a target for suspicion; and feeding but little—scarcely, it is said, sufficient to dine a mite—like Cassius, his lean and hungry visage at once stamped him as a conspirator. About this time he was seized by the Nihilist, and without digging very far for motives, it is evident he seriously undermined his constitution. With regard to the explosion on the Moscow railway, if he was not directly concerned in it, what does the following memorandum in his note-book signify: 'Bring a train up in its proper station, and when it is holed it will never depart from it.'"

### THE WRONG COLOUR.

CANDIDATE'S PRETTY WIFE: "It's all very well, Algernon, for you to wish me to take an active part in your canvass; but how can you expect me to go flaring about in orange—a colour that would make any woman of my complexion a fright? Why must you contest the borough on such unbecoming principles?"

—Funny Folks.

### SECRET VOTING—IN ONE LESSON.

1ST LADY CANVASSER: "You have only to take this card, and mark your voting paper exactly like it."

2ND L. C.: "And when you come out, you will hand the card to me."

ELECTOR: "But we vote by ballot in order that no one may know how—"

BOTH LADY CANVASSERS: "Quite right. That is voting by ballot!"

—Funny Folks.

### "ON THEIR 'METAL.'"

It appears that detectives are often baffled by escaped criminals wearing Messrs. So-and-so's "Mesopotamian Gold" jewellery, which "completely defies detection."

—Funny Folks.

### CANNIBALISM.

You may eat a lady's hand when it's a hot muff in.

—Funny Folks.

## TIME'S REVENGE;

OR,

## FOILED AT THE LAST.

### CHAPTER XI.

#### LIFTING THE MASK.

What mystic riddle lurks beneath thy words  
Which thou wouldst seem unwilling to express?  
Away with this ambiguous, shuffling phrase,  
And let thy oracle be understood. Rox.

THERE was no sign or symptom of lunacy in the clear, hard eyes, so strangely green in colour, deep-set, filled with quiet, subdued laughter. There was little of the suppliant in the queenly attitude, and haughty, if affable, manner. Margaret Lascelles was reading Gerald Allenby as easily as if conning the open page of a book.

"Then," she calmly remarked, "if you please, we will employ that language, as I have some matters to speak about which," she rapidly continued in fluent French, "it is not at all desirable, either for your sake or mine, should be easily understood by the good people of this place."

From that moment till the close of the interview, they both spoke in French.

"I believe you are wondering who and what I am," the lady went on, leaning back against her pillows. "We have met before—"

"Pardon me. It is impossible I could have forgotten you."

"Idle gallantry of speech. The time I speak of is now—horrible thought—over twenty years ago. At that time, you were scarcely eighteen."

"And you?" asked Gerald, smiling in spite of himself. "You look about seven or eight and twenty now."



"A truce to idle compliments. Time is precious, though Time is a bore," she supplemented, laughing gaily. "Let me at once candidly tell you—since you do not betray the smallest recollection of me—that I am Margaret Lascelles."

Gerald Allenby started up, then sat down again, and started at the smiling beauty as if at a ghost.

"You remember the name?"

"I should think so! By Jove!"

"You thought I was dead, perhaps?"

"Must I acknowledge that I never thought about you at all? As you have already observed I was but a boy when I saw you, and then—in fact, I hardly remember you at all on looking back."

"It does not signify. You know my history—I should rather say, the history of—you have heard something of me, I suppose?"

"Yes. I heard that you and Alex ran away together and got married, and got into no end of trouble with Sir Randal. He was an awful old tyrant, and had a temper like—"

"Good. I may assume you know who I am?"

"Certainly. You were Lady Allenby's—what do they call it?"

"Companion. General factotum. Lady's companion—phrase applied by the rich and fertile English language equally to those pretty toys filled with scissors, thimble, bodkin, and other implements of feminine labour, and to a young person warranted to bear any amount of spleen or ill humour; to have the hide of a rhinoceros; to be provided with any quantity of small change in the way of kisses for blows; to be able perpetually to play the part of the small boy in the Spartan story; and to be the happy possessor of a face like a simpering mask. I was Lady Allenby's companion. I was a young lady, but, of course, madam would as soon have expected her eldest son to lose his heart to me as to her parrot, her canary, or her favourite kitten. Yet he took it into his head to imagine he lost his heart to me, as the phrase goes. I caught his fancy, and he professed to love me, to be ready to die for my sake."

She laughed a low, savage laugh, full of honeyed sweetness, full of cynical bitterness.

"It was a painful affair, I believe," half hesitatingly said Gerald Allenby.

"He persuaded me to fly with him secretly, for he said his father would never forgive his marriage with me. I consented. He vowed with the most sacred vows he would marry me. These vows he never redeemed. My dreams of ease and splendour, my hopes of flinging back scorn and contempt on those who had looked down upon me as little better than a menial, were scattered to the winds. I was plunged into a position worse than that of the pariah I had been."

She spoke with haste and bitterness, the words coming with a rush, as if she were not aware of her own vehemence, and her attitude that of a person intensely wrapt up in a sense of her own wrongs.

The sweet, studied smile had, for the moment, died away; a lurid gleam of rage came into her eyes as she leaned forward steadfastly regarding Gerald Allenby. He drew back, almost imperceptibly, but with a slight movement of repulsion.

Gerald Allenby never excited himself about anything; he always desired to take life as easily as a Turk, and objected—he was too languid to detest—objected seriously to being obliged to stand by and see other people excite themselves.

Anything that savoured of a "scene" was utterly abhorrent to him, and he did not perceive why this woman, a stranger to him, whose history was a matter of perfect indifference—he did not in any way see why she should annoy and worry him by the embittered recital of past and gone injuries. His curiosity, too, was as good as satisfied. She was, no doubt, the mother of the girl they called Fayette. Well, what did he care about it? The affair was nothing to him.

"A bore," he pronounced the meeting.

By instinct, by the habit of rapidly reading those with whom she came in contact, Margaret Lascelles at once perceived she had made a false move, and hastened to retrieve her lost ground. The winning smile flickered out again, the glance of fury melted into softness, and Margaret leaned back, all studied grace.

"Pardon me," she said, gently, "for troubling you with what, no doubt, you have already heard. I wished to explain my situation before entering on a certain proposition which I desired to make—a proposition, I believe, equally to your advantage as to mine. I am a bitter, disappointed woman, and you must make allowance for a little quickness of speech."

"Certainly. I can quite comprehend your feelings."

"My life has been blighted. I have beauty—don't laugh at me for being conceited. I have been very beautiful, and I am still tolerably good-looking. I am clever; I can do almost anything. For nearly twenty years I have led a harassing, anxious existence—I, who might have been happy and prosperous. I have been nearly all over the world, teaching perhaps—an occupation I am not fond of—drawing designs for patterns, toys, and games; singing, dancing, acting with private dramatic clubs, reading, a Gill of all trades. I have been admired as a beauty and as a talented, if perhaps eccentric, creature."

"No doubt," said Gerald Allenby, looking at her with some curiosity. "A chequered life. But if you had married Alex, you would have had to encounter a life of hardship. Sir Randal never liked him, and had—a horror of mesalliances," he added, a flush on his dark face.

"I had been such a short time with the family at that unhappy period that I knew scarcely anything about the inner life. But I may as well briefly end my own history; I fear I am wearying you. I at last married a kind old man, who died, and left me a small independence, on which I at present exist. All this is babble; forgive me. Why should I thus chatter of myself? Let me come to the object of my interview with you. I have a child, one lovely, interesting girl, whom I adore. I have seen but little of her during her young life, for I could not, I dared not, subject her to the constant strain of anxiety which I perforce suffered myself."

A delicate filmy handkerchief was whipped out of her pocket by Margaret Lascelles, and applied lightly to each eye, to brush away an imaginary, symbolical tear.

"What the dickens is the woman driving at," was Gerald Allenby's impatient and impolite mental ejaculation.

"It is for her, my angel girl, that I work now," continued Margaret, a pathetic quaver in her voice. "Well, my marriage did not take place—with Alexander, I mean, but—"

She suddenly stopped, and looked at Gerald, searchingly, as if she would read his very soul. Then, twirling the thin gold chain that hung at her waist, her glittering green-tinted eyes glancing from her visitor to the bright links and back again, she went on:

"I have never been a wedded wife of Alexander Allenby's; I have never been in Scotland. But suppose I had gone to Scotland with him, and been there married, what then? And if I had a child, thus being married according to Scottish law, what then?"

She kept on twirling the chain carelessly, with the idle action of a pretty girl flirting with her lover. But her eyes never lost sight of his face for a moment.

"But then you say you have never been to Scotland. You say you never were married to Alex. Where's the good of supposing idle impossibilities?" he objected.

"Idle? Are they idle?"

"I have no idea what you mean."

She raised those thin, straight eyebrows, with a laughing kind of incredulity at such stupidity being existent.

"You have heard Sir Randal's will read? I know you have, for I have had strong reasons

for knowing the movements of the chiefs of the family. The old man showed remorse at his vile treatment of me, and of his eldest son. He said you knew it; that if Alexander had really married, and a child existed, that child, if a boy, should have all the estates; if a girl, one clear half. I was wrong to say he regretted his treatment of me, for I am not remembered."

"You are sure Alex married no one else?"

"Quite sure. Gerald Allenby, listen. You are a poor man—do not be offended. Listen. You have ruinously expensive tastes. Come, don't frown; the old man did not behave well to you at the last, he never did behave well to you. Do not be angry," for Gerald had risen from his seat abruptly. "I owe none of the family any gratitude, any thanks. I hate them all, except yourself, for whom I don't care a doit. If I could carry out my plans without the aid of a solitary being, it would be a thousand times better for me. But I cannot, I cannot, unluckily. And you are the only one who can help me."

"Help you! In what way, may I ask?"

"You may ask. I will tell you, tell you plainly and clearly, as frankly as I can. I know I may trust you, for it would not suit you to betray me. And if you did so, no one would believe you, no one would be hurt," she added, laughing pleasantly, with pretty ringing laughter. "Come, suppose I had been married in Scotland—"

"My opinion, madame, is that you are either very crazy, or very wicked. The crazy idea is the most charitable opinion I can arrive at."

"Bien. Only I beg to assure you the opinion is one totally without foundation. If you would not be so absurd we should get on much quicker. I don't mind being thought wicked—in fact, I rather like it; it seems chic, somehow. I want to prove my marriage. In two words, will you help me? Make your own terms."

"How can I help you to prove a marriage which has never taken place?" asked Gerald Allenby, who wished himself twenty leagues off.

"Where there's a will there's always a way. You alone can help me. But perhaps you are very fond of your nephew?"

"Perhaps I am," asserted Gerald Allenby, with a little snarl.

He was irritated and uneasy. A vague idea of this woman's meaning began to dawn on him, but it was a very nebulous idea. She was bent on some daring scheme, and wished to make him her accomplice—that much was clear. For that sort of thing he had no particular taste.

Margaret Lascelles drew from her pocket an ivory card-case—a pretty trifle, lined with azure silk. She had found it in a railway carriage one day, minus an owner. Touching the spring she opened and took from it a couple of old, half-discoloured letters. One of these she offered to Gerald.

After a momentary struggle of resistance against his better judgment, he took the paper. It was addressed to Miss Margaret Lascelles.

"Alexander's writing," he said, taking the letter itself from the envelope, looking at the post mark as he did so.

On one side was "Leicester," the date obscured from hurried and insufficient stamping; the other side being "Torquay." Gerald, rapidly glancing back over half-forgotten recollections, recalled to mind that Alexander was once summoned away to visit a dying relative, between whom and himself a strong affection existed. The letter was brief and hasty. There was no date or address within the letter; nothing to indicate from whence it had come, or at what period. Gerald remembered the family being at Torquay when Alex was at Leicester.

"MY DARLING," the writer said, "how could you have doubted me? I will explain all when we meet. Your letter was a cruel and bitter one; but I believe it was dictated in a moment of passion, and that you did not really mean what you said. I beseech you let me see you to-morrow evening, about six o'clock, at the place I named, down near the old tree by which we parted on that never-to-be-forgotten evening, when you

vowed that you loved me—that you would be mine. Yours till death, A. A. P.S. If they do not return to Althenham by to-morrow morning, let me know at once, and I will come to Torquay instead. I can scarcely endure this banishment from you."

"Well?" was all Gerald said.

Margaret gave him the second letter. It was not dated, and began abruptly:

"MARGARET, I feel an impatient longing to see you that no language can describe. If you feel a thousandth part of the love for me that consumes my heart for you, then you may imagine my yearning desire to bask in the sunshine of your dear presence. The days drag over with sluggish tardiness, as if to tantalise and worry me. In one week from this time I shall see you, shall clasp you once more within my arms, from whence you shall not soon escape again. I subdivide the time into hours and minutes, as children shake a sand-glass, and schoolboys notch off the weeks between themselves and their holidays. My dearest, my darling, my own, my sweet, my wife that is to be, I think of you by day, I dream of you by night. I feel your kisses on my lips. I hear your angelic voice in my ears. Your own devoted

"ALEXANDER ALLENBY."

Gerald Allenby coolly folded up this letter, and handed both papers to their owner, a cynical smile curling his lip. The man who had experienced little beyond an ephemeral fancy or an evil desire towards one of womankind could scarcely sympathise with this boy-lover raving.

"My wife that is to be!" he repeated, a dash of sarcasm in his tone. "To what use do you promise yourself to put your letters? They are without date, without the slightest clue to the place from whence they were written, except for the post-marks outside." He glanced carefully at the second letter, which Margaret had thrown on a table. It bore the post-mark of "London, September 24, 54," on one side, and on the other "Tollard-Parham, Sp. 25, 54." "No one could as much as ground a breach of promise case on such loose documents."

Margaret Lascelles leaned forward, and looked him full in the face, a red light burning in her eyes.

"If they had either date or address," she said, "I could not have planned my—what shall I call it?—plot, scheme?—what? Agree to give me your help," she continued, slowly, as if measuring her words, "and you shall see to what use I mean to put these letters. Find me a convenient obscure Scotch village, and a Scotch innkeeper without a conscience, who will wink and blink while his visitors' book is being examined, say, by yourself, and then you shall read these documents again, under a new light."

Gerald stared at her. The scheme broke upon him in its full meaning. Instantly he saw the advantage to himself, but the thought of the risk made him turn pale as death. The means to help in the nefarious scheme thus daringly planned was within his reach.

The widowed mother of his own body-servant kept a small, obscure inn, nestled in the utter obscurity of some mountain paths in the Highlands. Could the temptress have learnt this fact before proposing her plot to him? She had not known it; did not know it at this moment.

Gerald Allenby rapidly reviewed, as by a lurid flash of light, the pros and cons. He could easily do this thing. The old innkeeper was poor, Gallaspie, his valet and general factotum, was not over-scrupulous, and if he displayed any tenderness of conscience, there was no necessity for making an accomplice of him. Gerald could name his own terms for compliance.

"But no," he said, aloud, rising abruptly from his chair, and averting his face; "the thing is impossible—absolutely impossible."

"Good," said Margaret Lascelles, quietly, and with an air as if closing the interview. "She was by his irresolution, by the very effort at determination, that the game was in her own hands. "Then I may as well give up the affair, I could not carry it out myself: I am not bold enough, and I could be so easily tracked. Let us think no more about it. Thanks for your patience and

courtesy in listening so far. I have trespassed on your time unreasonably."

She knew he wished her to argue out the subject, to place the stupendous advantages to himself in the full, deceitful light of a glowing fancy, to lessen and soften the difficulties. But she was too experienced, too wary a trapper; she knew full well she had merely to leave the snare invitingly within sight and the victim would enmesh himself.

"Good afternoon," she said, a little languidly, the utmost awetness in her manner and tone, as she extended her hand royally.

He took it mechanically, and went out, dismissed to his own reflections.

"I wonder how long it will be before you come sneaking back," she muttered, an expression of intense, concentrated scorn on her handsome face. "I will not try to count the hours. I have become almost past-mistress in the noble art of patience."

## CHAPTER XII.

### A LOVER'S PERPLEXITIES.

It is the secret sympathy,  
The silver link, the silken tie,  
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,  
In body and in soul can bind.

Scott.

It was what she herself termed "a horrible nuisance," Miss Prue's being deprived of the two young girls at this particular juncture. Imprimis, it would be extremely awkward, every way, to be left alone at this time.

As the household now existed, it formed a kind of family, and "friends," i.e., Gervase Fordham, could come at any time and at any hour during the day, without provoking any remark. But if both the girls went, and she was left alone, of course she could not continue to receive "people," i.e., Gervase Fordham, in the same free and easy fashion.

Then it would be wretchedly lonely. She could not think of giving up the house. She had arranged to lease it, furnished, but her tenants were not to come until her marriage. As for hastening her marriage, that could not be done. And she had wanted to have the girls with her till the very day of the all-important event.

What was to be done? Surely, even if Beattie must go, Fayette might be left. As Margaret Lascelles had existed for so many years without her child, a few weeks more or less could not make much difference to her.

After much cogitation, Miss Ibbotson arrived at the determination to ask Margaret Lascelles to let Fayette remain until her—Miss Ibbotson's—marriage. If the worst came to the worst, she thought she would even ask Margaret Lascelles to stay at The Sycamores, though her gorge rose at this idea.

She did not say much to Fayette as they walked homewards through the sunshine, taking the longest way round for the sake of the air and for a diversion of thought. Fayette was silent and preoccupied too, and scarcely a word was uttered by either until they entered the quiet, shady house. Beattie flew at Fayette directly she appeared, intending to cross-examine her. But Fayette's sad face and downcast air showed that there was not much that was pleasant to tell or to hear.

Aunt Prue went away to her own room. Fayette wearily took off her hat and gloves, and placed them on the table, with slow deliberation. She felt so tired that she could not get beyond the little sitting-room by the porch. It was a pretty room, half-filled with flowers, warm in winter and cool in summer, with a quaint old window in three compartments, which reached nearly across the end overlooking the garden.

The pigeons had a favourite place of rendezvous outside, and were now fluttering about, strutting, pluming themselves, in and out of the sunlight, among the leaves that made an embowering framework to the window, and up and down the wide, trim garden walk. The calmness of Shalott itself lay on the garden; a cloud of perfume rose from the summer flowers, like languid pulses.

No echo from humming city could come here, no windy clanging of the minster clock ever disturbed the tranquility of this nunlike corner of earth; the drowsy hours dreamt the months away in this virginal retreat.

"You have seen her, Fayette—your own mother? The idea of your having a mother! You are better off than I am," Beattie said, a passing shade of melancholy on her bright face. "Was she glad to see you?"

"I suppose so."

"Why, of course she must have been; it is downright silly of me to ask you. Is she nice, like you?"

"She is fair. I don't know if she is like me."

A little dry sob choked Fayette's voice.

Beattie looked attentively at her. Fayette did not volunteer to break the silence, so at last Beattie said:

"Tell me all about it, every scrap, there's a darling."

She sat down by Fayette, and drew the golden head down on her own plump shoulder.

"There is not much to tell," said Fayette, closing her eyes wearily, like a tired child, receiving Beattie's caresses without returning them. "My—my mother—said she was glad to see me, but I don't think she cared much. She said she couldn't send to me before because she was so poor."

"Do you think—do you think—"

"What?"

"No. I must not say it. I was going to ask if you think you shall—love her."

"One must love one's mother, you know."

"Yes, of course. It's in the Catechism, and the Bible, and all that."

Beattie felt curious to see this mother, but she said, nothing more, and both lapsed into silence. Presently Fayette took up her hat and gloves and went away.

In the evening, Gervase Fordham, Mr. Arundell, and Percy Darvill all came, after dinner. The two latter gentlemen were to go back to London the next day. Miss Ibbotson had expected Gerald Allenby to come, and had even requested Patsy to keep back dinner for half-an-hour, but he did not put in an appearance.

It was a close, sultry night, one of those nights which seem to presage a storm, while perfectly fair and tranquil in themselves. A round, yellow moon shone from out a cloudless, indigo blue sky, casting a weird, golden light, and causing deep spectral shadows in the rambling, old-fashioned garden. Not a breath of air was stirring. A faint, heavy perfume arose from the flowers clustering in almost wild profusion, and close by the house the melancholy, sweet notes of a nightingale broke as otherwise well-nigh deathly stillness.

Gervase Fordham was obliged to depart earlier than was his habit. Mr. Arundell and Percy lingered over their coffee. Mr. Arundell and Miss Ibbotson sat down to a game of chess. The old gentleman said Miss Ibbotson was the exception proving the rule that ladies were not capable of playing that diplomatic game. Fayette wandered to the piano, and for awhile played some of Beethoven's most pathetic musings; but, getting tired, feeling miserably dispirited, she crept away, and stole off to her own room, meaning to come back again.

Beattie and Percy, by the open doors looking on the garden, were listening to the ceaseless jug-jug of the nightingale, that bird over popular with lovers. There is something strangely mesmeric in this calm, sultry summer moonlight. There is all the glamour, the visionary beauty of a dream, with the intense palpation of reality. The lovers, step by step, strayed down into the garden, the world forgetting, by the world forgot.

Yesterday, in the shock of the discovery that Beattie was the only child of a very wealthy man, Percy had jumped to the conclusion that it would be the most unpardonable conduct to ask her to bind herself in a promise to be his wife. The world—what would not Mrs. Grundy say? His own sense of honour—ah! the idea was



too dreadful. It would be cruel to trammel Beattie by a promise, before she had seen the bright world unfolding at her feet: it would be mean. And for a Darvill to be guilty of meanness would be something unforgivable.

To-day he had thought something of the same kind, though the feeling had softened a little. Why should he be despised even by a rich beauty? His pride had revolted in another direction. Why, his prospects were good; the arguments were now mostly pro in lieu of con. Besides, there could be no harm in telling Beattie he loved her, and finding out how her feelings lay as regarded him.

Above all, the calm summer's night, the sweet semi-solitude, even those broken strains of music played fitfully by Fayette, the mellow, amorous notes of the nightingale, drove all cool prudential considerations out of Percy's head. He was only twenty-three, and deeply in love, with a love which had commenced in his childhood. For many minutes not a word was exchanged. When they had wandered a little way out of sight and hearing, Percy took one of Beattie's hands, and drew the soft fingers across his lips.

"Beattie," he said, or rather whispered, "I go to-morrow. When next I return you will not be here. You will have gone and forgotten me, perhaps."

"Forgotten you!" said Beattie, reproachfully. "Why should I forget you?"

"You will not forget me, little love? Promise me."

"You know I could not forget you if I would," answered Beattie, blushing rosy red—though her blushes were unseen in the yellow moonlight.

"Yesterday I thought to ask you something which now—now I cannot ask."

Beattie did not reply. A kind of instinct hindered her.

"You are now rich, and I—it will be years before I make my way in the world," he continued, his voice taking a melancholy intonation. "I think I shall go to India, as your father did."

"To India, Percy! You shall not go," exclaimed Beattie, angrily.

These two had been like brother and sister all their young lives, and it was not until they had been separated three years ago, meeting only casually since, that the knowledge that they loved one another in a different way had revealed itself. Even yet, Beattie hardly realised that truth.

Percy's heart thrilled at her cry. There was a passionate entreaty in the tones, an imperative command in the words, as if she felt she had a right to bid him stay.

"Perhaps you may never see me again?" he went on.

Whichever way he took, he felt himself behaving rather shabbily. If he told her of his love he bound her unfairly; if he did not, and let her go, he would be a laggard in love. He wished her unknown father and all his riches at the bottom of the broad sea.

Beattie pushed him away with the pettish displeasure of a spoiled child. His words half terrified her. Then Percy forgot all his prudent considerations and caught her in his arms and kissed her. Whereupon Beattie burst out crying, irrationally, and apropos of nothing at all.

"Never mind, Beattie, darling, love. I'll stay at home and work like—the deuce, and make my way; and—and—you do love me a little bit?"

Miss Prue and Mr. Arundell were deep in their game of chess, but suddenly Miss Prue happened to look up, and found that the three young people had disappeared. She wanted to speak a few words to Mr. Arundell, so she seized this as a favourable opportunity. His eyes were fixed on the men; but as she drew back slightly he glanced at her, and taking off his spectacles, waited for her to speak, as she evidently meditated doing.

"Dear Mr. Arundell," Miss Prue said, "her hand on a king, which was in serious difficulties. I wished to say a word or two about that poor girl Fayette."

"Poor girl! A strange way of alluding to her surely," said Mr. Arundell, surprised.

Miss Ibbotson rapidly gave him an account of the morning's visit, and her own impressions of Margaret Lascelles. The old gentleman knew the story of that lady's career, but had never seen her.

"I should be so glad, so thankful to know there was someone watching over the child," Miss Ibbotson went on.

She spoke in a subdued tone, not knowing where the young people might have got to.

"You have always liked her—"

"She is a sweet, amiable creature, and I have loved her always, as if she were my own child," said Mr. Arundell, hastily.

"She will be taken from my charge entirely. I do not trust that woman, and if Fayette is not well-treated she will fret herself to death. I don't suppose the woman will beat her but—well, you know what I mean!" said Miss Ibbotson.

Mr. Arundell stroked his chin reflectively.

"But, really, you know, my dear friend, I don't see what I can do. The girl will be with her mother, and I could not interfere, no matter what happens. I am not acquainted with Mrs. Lascelles, and really—"

Miss Ibbotson impatiently shrugged her angular shoulders.

"Well, you know what I mean. I don't know why, but I have a queer kind of foreboding that something is wrong. It seems to me odd that she should have never made a sign all these years, and now, all of a sudden, she pops out like a jack-in-the-box, as a girl and wants to carry off the child. As to being fond of her or caring a straw about her, that is simply nonsense."

"But," argued Mr. Arundell, in his mild way, "why should she not repair the neglect of years? Probably she has been in unusual circumstances—"

"Straitened fiddlesticks," impatiently interrupted Miss Ibbotson, moving her king and taking her adversary's best man with a spiteful snuff. "I tell you there is something more than she chooses to avow. If she had cared a button about the girl, do you think she'd have allowed her to think herself motherless all these years? Don't talk to me."

"But what can I do?" asked Mr. Arundell.

"You know what I mean—no, you can't move that way, or I take you—I feel very sure you will not lose sight of the poor child. I will take care you have her address."

"I will try to see this Margaret Lascelles before I depart. Is there any way I could see her?"

Miss Ibbotson reflected.

"As you are going away, I'm afraid not. She is now laid up with her foot, so is invisible to meet eyes. But it does not signify; you will, I feel sure, remember what I have said."

Mr. Arundell took a pinch of snuff, a luxury he indulged in about twice each day, and said nothing. There was nothing to say, in fact. Presently Beattie came in by the door leading from the garden, her face transfigured with joy and a new blissful happiness. Fayette came in from the opposite side from the staircase, having just descended from her own room, her eyes shining with a martyr light.

Gerald Allenby had hired a horse from the landlord of the "Three Jolly Ploughboys," and started off for a long ride. It was doubtful if Margaret Lascelles would be able to lure him to her service after all. The scheme was so daring, the iniquity so great, the possibility of being discovered so likely, that he was half afraid to debate the subject in his own mind. He scarcely dared to see this woman again.

Although he had many reasons urging him to become her accomplice, yet he shrank in fear. If he did agree to aid her in patching up this imaginary Scotch marriage, he determined to fix half the property as his fee. He disliked his nephew, Sir Hubert, and felt a vindictive envy of his superior fortune.

To be partly dependent on a man whom he envied and disliked was galling. If Sir Hubert

had been childless, he would not have felt so spitefully towards him. If there was even a likelihood that his daughter would die unmarried, things would not be so unpleasant.

But Sir Hubert was not childless. And Beattie did not look the kind of girl likely to die, while she was already provided with a lover—of all men, perhaps, the one Gerald Allenby hated the most. A young fellow, able, willing, too, to defend his own rights and watch over those of Beattie.

She was only eighteen, and looked in splendid health and spirits, and very unimpressible; not a die-away creature like Fayette, with the soft dimples in her fair, spiritual face, and those wistful shadows in her blue eyes. One might, by a stretch of fancy, imagine Fayette unfolding a pair of white wings and floating off into blue empyrean haze.

It was very late when he returned: some hours too late to admit of his going to dine at The Sycamores, as Miss Ibbotson had proposed. He managed to stop at an inn some miles off, however, on his way, and as did not return like a fasting pilgrim. When he re-entered the portals of the "Three Jolly Ploughboys," he made a frugal supper, and went off then to his own room to pass a sleepless night.

In the morning he had come to the decision that it would be impossible—utterly impossible to ever see Margaret Lascelles again. So he wrote a few lines in French on a leaf of his pocket-book, saying he was unexpectedly called away by pressing business, and could not say for certain when he should be able to see her again.

Margaret Lascelles was lounging over her breakfast when this note was brought to her by Mrs. Shugard. She laid it by her plate until the landlady had hustled off again, and then slowly unfolded it and read the brief message. A very disagreeable smile twisted up her thin red lips, showing the gleam of white teeth, as when a dog snarls.

"He is a coward and an idiot!" she muttered. "Well, I can wait a little while longer. It is only a question of time. Perhaps I may have to work by myself after all," and then she snarled again.

Gerald Allenby hurried off to The Sycamores with the same story of being unexpectedly summoned away, and would not hear of Miss Ibbotson's objections. By sheer dint of resolute argument he overbore everything. Beattie's boxes and belongings could all be sent after her, and if they could not, why her father could buy her a whole shopful of things—every necessary and every superfluity her fancy could name. He got decidedly ill-tempered at last, and looked ready to swear.

Miss Ibbotson was alone when he called, and by the time the girls came in from their usual after-breakfast "constitutional" with Roy, they found that Mr. Allenby had settled that Beattie was to start off to meet her father that very afternoon by the two-thirty-five train for Phippsborough. Beattie was startled when Aunt Prue told her lugubriously that she must go.

"I am very sorry," said her uncle, blandly. "When I promised to wait an indefinite time, my dear, I was of course quite unaware that I should be unexpectedly summoned away."

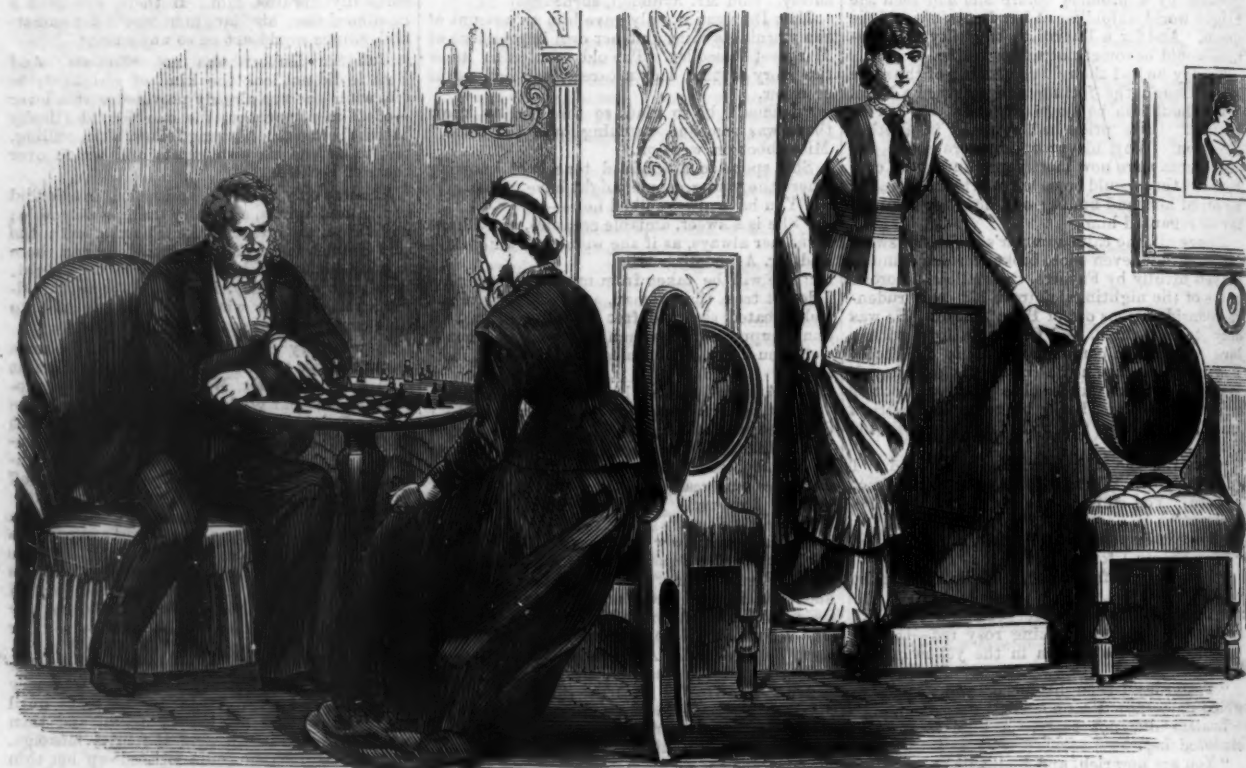
"But," Beattie commenced, after making several futile attempts to speak.

She felt absolutely frightened, for she had never been away from Miss Ibbotson for one entire day.

"Come, come, nonsense," said Gerald Allenby, impatiently, ready to swear with vexation, yet obliged to keep up that soft, half-caressing manner which appeared habitual with him. "Pray do not make my worries greater than they are. I am called away on most important business. I cannot tell when I may be free, and your father is seriously unwell, nervous—ah—um—I hardly know what. He will not trust anyone but me."

"As for that, I could take her myself," urged Miss Ibbotson.

"Very well," answered Gerald Allenby, leading back with a sigh of despair and weariness.



[KINDLY PLOTTERS.]

But it occurred to Miss Ibbotson that it would be extremely inconvenient, and very expensive, and a great bother also, to go with Beattie and then return home. And she did not care much, either, to meet any of Beattie's people.

"I think, my dear, you had better go this afternoon with your uncle. It cannot be helped, and if your father is unwell, why, the sooner you are with him the better."

"As you please, Aunt Prue," said Beattie. In spite of her timidity, the novelty of this sudden flight rather amused her. She did not feel sentimentally disposed towards the father whom she had never seen, and who had never encouraged her to write, but she wished to see him, nevertheless, and to see the fine home, and all the grand surroundings that awaited her.

Fayette was letting herself drift. Her heart sank still lower when she heard this discussion and its settlement; but she went up with Beattie to help in packing a travelling bag with necessities. Aunt Prue sent Phoebe down to the "Three Jolly Ploughboys" with a note explaining to Margaret Lascelles that Fayette could not visit her until about four or five o'clock.

Gerald Allenby talked to Miss Ibbotson a little about Margaret Lascelles, but he was very guarded in what he said, and she was equally reticent, so they did not become particularly confidential. In truth, both were relieved when the girls re-appeared. Beattie was confused and excited.

Fayette was confused, and felt as if walking in a dream. Their talk the day the letters had come seemed like those eventful talks in fairy tales, when a deceitful old witch in a red cloak comes, and whisking round her crutch, changes everything all at once, in the proverbial twinkling of an eye.

Even when Aunt Prue had settled that they should be launched out into the world, everything had seemed far off. Besides, it is one thing to pack up, and sail away in a ship; it is quite another to be lifted up and dropped into

the sea, as it were, by the eagle-claws of Fate.

Beattie's eyes were ablaze, the rose-colour in her cheeks deepened, a sort of half-smiling, half tearful expression on her face. She looked magnificently handsome. Aunt Prue stood up, wearily.

"I cannot go with you to the station. I see Fayette means to go, as she has her hat on. Well, my dear, good-bye. God bless you, my dear Beattie."

A tear started into each cold blue eye as she kissed Beattie, kindly, even lovingly. She felt that in all probability they should never meet in this life again. But she did not say so, being a prudent woman, and having an almost masculine dislike of "scenes." Beattie kissed her aunt, once, twice, and then turned to go.

Gerald Allenby felt relieved that so much bother at all events was over, and gladly led the way. But Beattie suddenly remembered that she had not bid Patsy or Phoebe farewell, and exclaimed:

"Please excuse me for a minute, uncle, I want to see our old servant before I go."

Patsy was occupied like Jenny in the nursery song, hanging out the clothes, for it was washing day, and she, with Phoebe and the old woman who came to help, had been busily engaged all the morning in flying out tempestuously.

"Lor, Miss Beattie, whatever's the matter now?"

"I'm going away, Patsy—now, this very minute."

"G-going where, for gracious sake?" ejaculated Patsy, gazing at her as if petrified.

"My uncle, Mr. Allenby, has come to say that he can't wait, as he promised to do. All my things are to be sent after me."

"Going away! And never to come back again!" cried Patsy, dismally.

Phoebe stood like a statue of amazement in front of her tub, a long wet piece of drapery clutched in her hands, her eyes like goggles, her mouth wide open.

"No, no, don't say that. I shall come back in a week or two, perhaps. I am only going to see my dear father, you know, Patsy. I must come back, for my aunt's wedding."

"Well, well, well. It's a world of change and parting. Miss Fayette's not going, I hope and trust to goodness?"

"No, Patsy, she will be left to console you. Good-bye, Patsy. You have forgiven me for all the bother I have caused you—"

"Oh, nonsense, Miss Beattie, the idea of going on like that!"

"I've left a few things with Faye I should like you to have. And, Patsy, when I come back, I mean to bring you something nice—really nice, you know, because I shall have quantities and quantities of money then. I'll bring you a pair of long gold earrings. Good-bye; my uncle will be cross if I keep him waiting much longer, for we must go by the two-thirty-five train. Good-bye, Phoebe."

Beattie kept on talking fast, for she liked Patsy. And even in the midst of her whirl of excitement, a sentimental regret at quitting this tranquil home compressed her heart. Patsy with an effort restrained her tears, and silently embraced the young girl.

Phoebe was too much astonished to make much of a demonstration. The old woman "help," who had known Beattie for some fifteen years, dipped and grinned with ostentatious sorrow. Beattie flew back to her waiting escort.

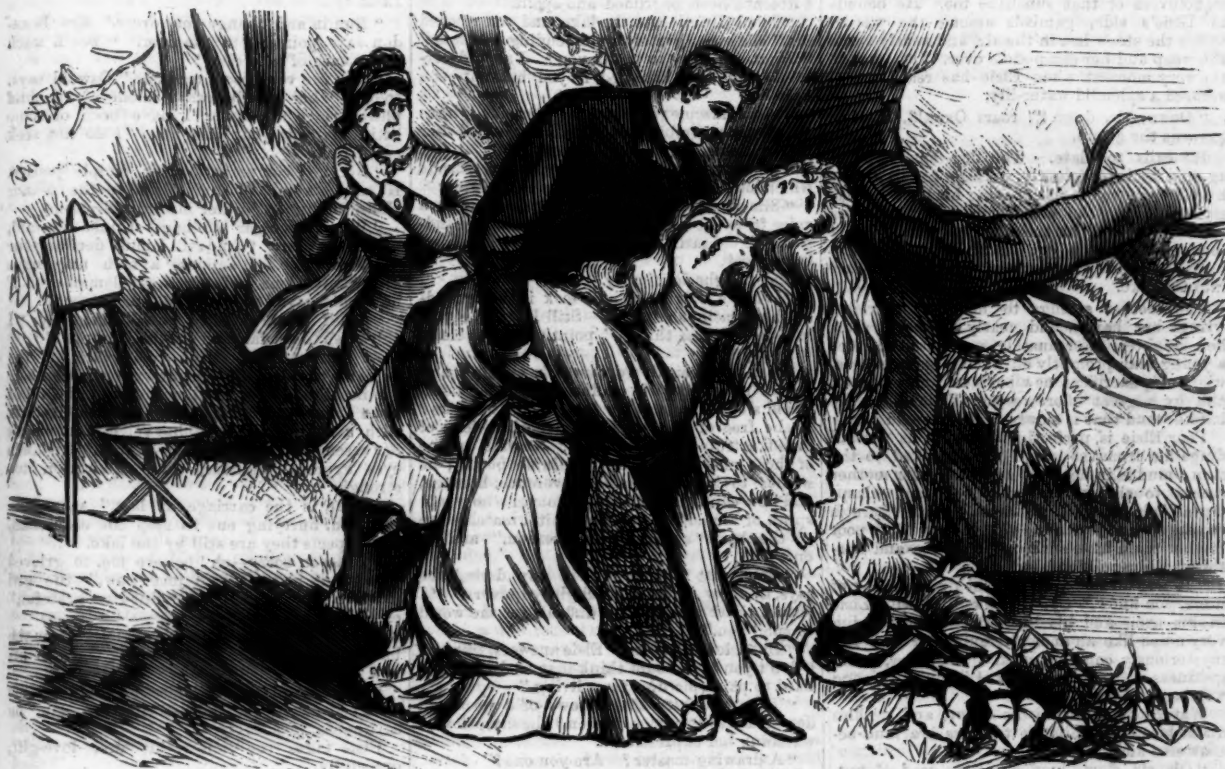
"Now I am ready, uncle," she said, standing on the threshold of the door.

"She's a splendid creature, begad," thought Mr. Allenby, who would have been infinitely more pleased had she looked a poor, sickly, reedy little specimen of humanity.

He bade Miss Ibbotson a courteous adieu, making half-a-dozen hypocritical observations, which she politely accepted in a matter-of-course way, and then he went away, Beattie on his left, Fayette, like a pale lily, on his right.

(To be Continued.)





[HIS DESTINY.]

## ELSIE'S LOVE TEST.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

## CHAPTER I.

## WATER-LILIES.

And from the darkening heaven of her eyes  
A starry spirit looks out. Can it be love?

EVERYONE declared that Oswald Fullerton was too romantic. He had gone to Paris wealthy, clever, and universally fêted, and with letters of introduction to some of the highest families; he had invariably got into scrapes and mischief of all kinds.

His romance made him fight duels, and invariably with the wrong individual. He also fell in love, or rather fancied he did, with some disappointing idol, and it was the height of his desire and ambition to be loved solely for himself and not for his fortune.

But where is the "fair impossible she" who will come like a sunbeam across his path? Oswald waited with natural and exemplary patience for her who would crown his wishes, and evaded all the efforts of match-making mammas with daughters to sell, because they all knew that he was rich.

"I would rather marry a flower-girl and know that she loved me for myself than a princess of the blood royal who wanted my fortune," this eccentric young man is saying to his hostess, Mrs. Eccles, of Chippendale Park, where he is at present staying.

"Romance will be your ruin, my dear Oswald," she answers, maternally. "With your fortune you really ought to marry."

"So I will one day," he answers, and thinks gloomily of the odd collection of gloves, flowers, locks of hair, and pocket handkerchiefs he collected in Paris on various occasions, but found

every syren associated with these relics mercenary when soundly tested.

"Such a man as you seems connected with rope ladders, daggers, prisons, stolen kisses, and the divorce court," says Mrs. Eccles, with an affectionate pat on his arm. "You have surely made conquests enough, you naughty Attila."

"Never the right one," answers Oswald, preparing for his walk and calling to a magnificent mastiff. "You may think me a fool if you like, but I should die of despondency if I could find no earnest passionate love in the heart of the woman I married."

She turns her pretty head archly, then shakes a warning finger at this incomprehensible young man, while Oswald passes through the gardens and park on to the main road.

Will he ever find his heroine—his ideal? He perfectly loathes conventional women. Is life to be mainly centred in good dinners, good company and a general evading of those clever anglers who try to bait the matrimonial hook so temptingly?

Oswald is very fond of sketching, and the scenery round Chippendale Park is much admired and sought after by artists. He selects a lovely nook near a lake where he can hear that melodious "drowsy tinkling" of the folded sheep at short intervals, and catch a view of distant spires and towers.

Oswald places himself, his easel, and sketching book nearly against the trunk of an aged tree with odd, fantastic roots, and begins to sketch. His life is very tedious, because he is generally an indolent, purposeless young man. He often envies those who have an object to pursue.

Suddenly he is aroused by the sound of voices—an old voice and a young one—and looking round he sees at no very great distance off a middle-aged lady dressed in stripes of yellow and black, so that she resembles a large wasp, followed by a young girl who could be scarcely more than seventeen, wearing a large broad-brimmed straw hat. Oswald's sensitive heart

begins to beat. Another girl! Will she be the right one? He speculates vaguely over even strangers—such is the despair of his soul.

"My dear Elsie, don't talk to me about rural life, for I simply hate it. That horrid old man who has tried to bring us home a nearer cut by the lake has plunged us into inches of water. My boots quite stick to my stockings!" cries the human wasp, viciously.

"Oh, mamma, hush! There is a young man sketching by the tree," says a sweet voice that chimes in charmingly with the drowsy tinkle of the sheep bells.

"And what if there is?" asks mamma, putting down her camp-stool with a jerk. "Some loafer, I daresay, or a miserable artist trying to get a correct likeness of that starved-looking donkey to the right."

"I don't look rich, Heaven be praised for that," thinks Oswald, continuing his work. "She's complimentary to artists, I must say. Poor beggars, they often have a hard time of it too."

"He looks very interesting, mamma, like a picture we saw in Germany of Werther," Elsie murmurs, wishing her mamma would plant their camp-stools nearer the supposed artist.

"Poor as a rat, I'll be bound."

"Delicious," mutters Oswald, stealing a glance at Elsie as she sits by the lake.

She has thrown off her large straw hat. Her golden brown hair is plaited in the fashionable knot at the back of her head, and she is trying to reach some water-lilies with the handle of a yellow sunshade. Imagine an exquisitely pure and perfect face, a figure yielding and flexible as a willow wand, little hands tightly grasping a twisted stick attacking obstinate water-lilies. Oswald is lost in another dream. He thinks of the popular pictures of the "Christian Martyr" and Ophelia in the same breath.

"What a little darling! If I could only be introduced to her," is his reflection as he whistles to his mastiff in order to attract Elsie's attention.

But the mastiff Loris is interested in the manoeuvres of that sunshade too. He bounds to Elsie's side, gambols among the weeds, tosses the straw hat in the air, and nearly turns the wasp and her camp-stool over. Just, too, at the very moment when Elsie has reached and secured a splendid water-lily.

"Down, sir, down!" roars Oswald, making towards the group.

He calls too late. The dog has bounded against Elsie so violently, perhaps from terror at his disobedience in not obeying his master, that she falls into the water, for the treacherous weeds and mud at the edge gave way at a touch, and with a cry that pierces Oswald's heart, she disappears among the long grasses into the lake.

The mother springs to her feet, shrieks, wrings her hands, and nearly jumps in after her daughter. Fortunately, not quite, she sees a young man promptly advancing to the rescue, who nobly sacrifices new boots and new clothes, and by a great effort rescues Elsie from the hateful mud that is slowly choking around her.

Poor Elsie is perfectly insensible as Oswald drags her from the lake. She is soaked to the skin, mud is in her eyes and ears. Her mother ceases to shriek, and now sobs and clasps Oswald's hand with gratitude. Surely here is romance, and with a vengeance. The poor mother could have sunk on her knees and worshipped him as Elsie's saviour.

"It was all the fault of that tiresome dog of mine, you know," Oswald is saying, with Elsie in his arms and his hat battered in, looking very much like an ancient troubadour who has mysteriously come to grief. "However, thank goodness, no harm has come of it, only a sound wetting for both of us."

Water has crept into his collar, and trickles about his arms, while his trousers are mud-spattered and soiled.

"Oh, sir, dear, kind sir, how good of you. What can we say to thank you? Your own clothes spoilt, too," gasps the mother, looking a picture of horror.

Elsie's hair, loosened from its braid, hangs in damp clusters over Oswald's arm; her lovely eyes are closed, so also are her lips. Never, thinks Oswald, has any girl looked more charming in a disordered toilette. His ardent imagination is again fired, and he feels as mentally excited as she is physically insensible.

"What shall we do with her?" he asks, timidly, after a rather awkward pause, and smiles.

"Take her to the nearest cottage, and let us get her a change of clothes. Our mansion—the Manor House—is some miles distant: we drove here," Elsie's mother explains, pompously, wishing to impress the supposed artist with the grandeur of their locus standi.

"Have I the honour of addressing Mrs. Brandon, of the Manor House?" he asks, walking by her side and still carrying his unconscious burden.

"You have, sir, and you—"

"I, madame, am simply a poor artist staying in Chippendale village in order to make some sketches," Oswald says, believing he may now perchance realise his dream—to woo and win a girl unsuspecting of his wealth and position has been his chief desire.

In due time the cottage is reached, and Susan Graham, one of Mr. Brandon's tenants, receives them with plentiful curries and voluble exclamations of horror and alarm. Oswald places Elsie gently on the rickety horse-hair couch, and at the movement she stirs—her breast heaves and her eyes open. Oswald looks right into them suddenly with a thoughtful, piercing gravity that sends the blood into the delicate face.

"Where am I—what has happened?" asks Elsie, shivering and glancing round the room. "Is this a cottage?"

Mrs. Brandon has momentarily retired into an inner room to dive into a monstrous clothes press for suitable raiment. Oswald is not a man to lose an opportunity. Suppose after this they never meet again? Elsie glances ruefully at

her mud-bespattered little shoes, their Louis the Fifteenth heels begrimed and spoilt.

"Then I fell into the lake, and you rescued me," she says, gratefully, extending her hand. "What can I say to thank you? I should certainly have been drowned if you had not been near."

This handsome young man by her side, who so singularly resembles Werther, has carried her in his arms across the fields and looks at her with that tender kind of respect and solicitude which makes him more than ever interesting.

"She shan't wear print or gingham," cries a voice from the adjoining room. "Your grandmother's old satin, if you like. Surely, anything but print."

Elsie laughs deliciously.

"What a fright I shall look in her grandmother's satin, shan't I?" Still Elsie will be glad to take off these things," pointing to her limp, wet grey silk.

A dusky red steals to Oswald's cheek, a new sort of almost boyish gladness is in his mood. Could she love a man for himself, he wonders? Is she free of the world's chief sins—love of greed, artfulness, calculation? Oswald is one of those men whose virtues—feminine purity, he wishes to inspire passion, reverence, homage, and how can these exist in a woman who would speak of him simply as "a capital match—one of the best 'spec's' of the season," and so on.

"You must be adorable in any dress," he says, in a low voice that slightly quivers. "I should think it would be difficult for the world to spoil you."

"But I love pleasure," Elsie answers, frankly. "Don't you? I should think it must be awfully hard to paint pictures for a living."

"Then you pity the sorrows of a poor and despised drawing-master, then?" he says, slowly, watching her expression.

"A drawing-master? Are you one?"

He nods his head.

"Do you think it a pleasant career?"

"I think any career is noble that is followed out with truthfulness, patience, and honesty," she says, with a blush.

How those grand grey eyes of his seem to rest on hers and pierce her very soul!

"You are an angel, Miss Brandon, to talk like that. You have the old grace of girlhood, so rare to find now-a-days. If you saw some of my pupils—"

"Don't flatter me, please," Elsie cries, "for I'm very ordinary. I'm a schoolgirl myself, and for another year, too. At the end of that time I am expected to make a grand match. Mamma is always harping on it."

"Tell me the name of your school, Miss Brandon," Oswald murmurs, as she rises at her mother's call.

His romantic nature detects the approach of a real living, human drama at last.

"I don't think I ought," Elsie mutters, palpitating.

"Not as my reward?" he pleads, rising.

Mrs. Brandon bustles into the room, holding up Mrs. Graham's grandmother's satin. She is a coarse, massively built woman, and has overheard a good deal of their conversation.

"I always come to the point, sir, in business matters," she said, taking out her purse, and attributing his delay to but one cause. "You've rescued my girl from an ugly dip, and you've spoilt your clothes. The least we can do is to offer to pay for new ones. No nonsense. Business is business, mind, and if you earn your money as a drawing-master you can't afford to jump after young women into muddy water. Can you, eh? No offence. Think it over."

Oswald can hardly restrain a smile. He thinks of Morris, diffident and magnificent of valets, of the obsequious army tailor, whose stitches cost more than any others in London, and lastly of Mrs. Eccles, and of her ringing laughter when he shall describe the scene. Elsie cringes and rests her hand on her mother's to check this, to her, offensive sentiment. Mrs. Brandon fears this young fellow may come philandering after Elsie, and wishes to nip sentiment in the bud.

"You are insulting him, mamma," whispers Elsie.

"Run in and change your dress," Mrs. Brandon says, pointing to the door. "You'll catch your death of cold else."

"You are very good, madame," Oswald says, coldly; "but it will always be one of my chief pleasures to remember I have been of some little service to your daughter. I do not seek payment."

"No, no; compensation, sir, simple justice. He expects me to invite him to the Manor House to dinner," is her inward reflection.

"What a vulgar old hag," thinks Oswald, with a shudder. "And still I must decline your offer, madame. I suppose a man may have some pretensions to being a gentleman even if he should have the misfortune to be poor."

"Oh, if you're satisfied I am," haughtily. "I only wish to act fair and square all round." At this moment Elsie re-appears in the quaintly antiquated garment. Her golden hair has had the mud brushed out of it by the aid of clear spring water, and she has tied it back with a shabby piece of blue velvet that makes her resemble a portrait of St. Cecilia. Oswald's eyes express, perhaps, his admiration too strongly.

"Here is the carriage at last," says Mrs. Brandon, hurrying out to stop the coachman, who expects they are still by the lake.

"I was so sorry—oh! believe me, so grieved at what mamma said just now," the girl utters, tears in her eyes. "But I am grateful," extending her hand.

Oswald draws a tiny bunch of violets from the buttonhole of his coat and offers them to his new heroine.

"If you would but promise not to forget me for a few hours, not, at least, till then," he says again, pleadingly.

Elsie takes the violets, his first love-gift, gracefully.

"Thank you. I shall prize them," she answers, simply. "You rescued me from death."

"If I could but one day give her life and love," he thinks, as with a sigh he watches them depart, and then resolves to return home quickly and change his wet clothes.

Loris, the mastiff, and the cause of the mischief, escaped the severe thrashing his master had resolved to visit him with for his disobedience in consideration of the delightful romance that had followed, and received a mild lecture instead.

"So much for the prologue," Oswald murmurs, lighting a strong cigar, as he seeks his easel and sketching book; "and now for the play."

## CHAPTER II.

### CLOUDLAND IN BOTH SENSES.

Love!—what a volume in a word, an ocean in a tear!  
A seventh heaven in a glance—a whirlwind in a sigh.

OSWALD appears to considerable personal disadvantage as he enters Chippendale Hall. Mrs. Eccles, in costly millinery, is expecting the Duchess of Dulsemore to luncheon, and meets Oswald on the stairs.

"Why, my dear fellow, where have you been?" she cries, aghast at the vision before her.

"Into the lake," answers Oswald, lightly. "Found myself so completely given over to the blues that I attempted felo-de-se, you know, and was saved by a golden-haired mermaid."

He does not, on reflection, retail his adventure to the pretty woman, who already half despises his romantic weaknesses, and who wishes he would fall in love with her for a change. Poor fellow! How she would comfort him, and what charming reproaches and caressing tenderness should cure his folly. Oswald laughs and passes on to his room, startling Morris, his valet, almost out of his senses.

"Oh, lord, sir! I fancied I'd seen a ghost," cries Morris, who is a Roman Catholic, and crosses himself as he speaks.



"All in mud, I suppose. Here, make haste and prepare me a tepid bath, and then pack up my things: this afternoon. I mean to leave Chippendale Park this evening."

Morris, refreshed by a substantial hot luncheon, and loath to leave so hospitable a roof, sighs as his master flings his coat over a chair. "He's fallen in love again, I suppose," is Morris' mournful soliloquy.

"Tisn't a duel, sir, this time, is it?" he asks, respectfully; "because a duel-fighter is half a heathen, and I should want to leave it that there Count Amertole is again thirsting for your blood, sir," ends Morris, in a dramatic aside.

Oswald laughs. "What d'ye say to lodgings, eh, Morris?" "I can't abide them: furnished apartments, sir, but if it is your wish—"

"Very poor lodgings this time, Morris," says Oswald. "And you may have to pass as my brother or uncle or cousin."

"Oh, sir, these froaks will end in Bedlam," answers the valet, feeling it his duty to strike a warning note, and giving the muddy coat a vicious shake.

Oswald descends clothed à ravir to luncheon, and with all the glory of romance to sustain him. That darling Elsie! How he could adore her, and how he means to steal her heart and make her blush and tremble at his footstep when the right time shall come.

That speech of Elsie's relating to a career convinces him she is above the herd of mindless simpletons, the social dummies he has always so despised. He soon ascertains all he cares to know about the Brandons, who are wealthy business people. He hears that Elsie is charming and their only daughter, and that she goes to some grand finishing school at Notting Hill.

"I'm sorry we shall lose you so soon, Oswald," Mr. Eccles says from the other end of the table. "You're anxious to be in London again, I hear?"

"I shall look you up again at Christmas," the young man answers, slowly. "If you come to town a note at my club will always find me."

"Don't you mean to live at Herne Court?" "Oh, dear no," says Oswald, dryly. "That place half drives me mad, and the sixteen servants included."

It was a superb estate of his in Surrey where he sometimes passed a few months in autumn when tired of yachting.

"Why not open your town house in Berkeley Square?"

"I've had enough of Berkeley Square for the present," is the illogical reply.

"What a pity you don't marry and go into Parliament," says Mrs. Eccles, sharply, and turning the subject.

Although Oswald leaves Chippendale Park to-day he does not leave the neighbourhood. He and Elsie have had several stolen interviews since their first meeting, and he learns to worship her.

In due time he returns to town, and by a little bribery and corruption, all equally fair in love, he presents himself with excellent recommendations as drawing-master before the Misses Pemberton, of The Grange, Notting Hill, and the spinsters, being impressed by his extremely moderate terms and polished address, are glad to employ a man with an especial gift for securing rapid progress to his pupils, and considerable ingenuity in the treatment of clouds and cattle.

David Cox taught drawing, and why should not he? Poor Morris finds his eccentric master has taken cheap apartments in the Portobello Road, dresses seedily, lets his hair grow long, and has a mania for carrying H.B. pencils about in his pockets, pieces of indiarubber, and penknives.

"How will it end?" asks the discreet valet, obliged to content himself with cindery chops and waxy potatoes. "Is master a-goin' on in this way with a view to courtin'?" He's mad as a March hare."

And still Oswald has not yet seen Elsie. A temporary illness has obliged her parents to postpone her return to school. But to-day, as

he takes his place at the table, and sees various fair, braided heads bent over sepia sketches and water-colour drawings, his heart beats strangely, for Elsie may be expected at any hour this afternoon.

Oswald finds his pupils very docile. They all profess to like drawing immensely, and the handsome man who instructs them is more agreeable than Mr. Vernet, the French master, who always smelt of garlic. Just as Oswald has gone the round of his pupils, and has fallen into a reverie, the door opens, and Elsie enters, looking so sweet, so sun-like, in her blue school dress, he can hardly look at her unmoved.

"Your new pupil, Mr. Fullerton," Miss Pemberton says, bringing Elsie up to her master. "You will find her very patient and painstaking."

Elsie starts and blushes. She has begun to love this daring stranger all unknown to herself, to dwell on his image, to cherish the withered violets. Has she not pressed each of them between the leaves of her favourite poetry books, and even put them under her pillow and kissed them ere sleeping?

Her hand trembles so much she can hardly continue her sepia drawing. It is a study of angry clouds and a wild sea dashing its foamy spray over some rocks, while sea-gulls whirl overhead above a ship in distress.

"Your clouds are too cold, too grey," Miss Brandon, the master says, coming round to Elsie, both of them feeling their pulses leap as their hands meet over the pencil.

"It is indeed cloudland for both. A new world, a new realm, seems revealed."

"Then you alter them, please," Elsie answers, with a little pout no one perceives but Oswald.

"The sea-gulls are supposed to be screaming and whirling over the dead and drowning," Oswald remarks. "The ship is of course a wreck. Make the birds look as if they could fly," he ends again, meeting the light in her innocent eyes.

Yet there is a hidden flame beneath those deep, liquid wells of loveliness that no other girls have reflected for him. The timid look she turns on him is one of love. The dreamy fervour of her expression all tells the same tale. Has he at last awoke a human soul to sweet response. If he has not yet he means to try, and he has faith in himself.

Elsie blurs and spoils her sky entirely. It resembles a placid, unchangeable Italian firmament instead of the wild sky of the North, full of angry violence and fierce prophecy. The sea takes the mild tone of a harmless mill-pond, and the sea-gulls resemble the legendary dove resting on Mount Ararat.

"This will never do, Miss Brandon," he says, with assumed anger, after watching her fruitless attempts to improve all; and poor Elsie bursts into tears.

"Retire to your room, Miss Brandon," the governess says, in a sharp voice. Then to Oswald, apologetically: "Poor girl! She has been very ill lately, a low fever, or something of that kind, and she was always nervous. We will excuse you to-day, dear. You may walk in the garden if you like," she ends, kindly, as Oswald rises to open the door for Elsie.

As he does so and meets her reproachful glance, he manages to slip some hastily scribbled writing into her hand.

Elsie takes a few turns in the garden, and at last enters a small summer-house built in the Swiss style, when she buries her head in her hands and sobs aloud. Alas, for her peace of mind! She loves the drawing-master. The apparently careless tones he addressed her in have cut her to the heart.

Elsie feels a hopeless misery stealing over her. She knows her parents would rather see her dead than married to Oswald, and he has tacitly wooed her. He has taken her heart, and left consuming fire in its place. Then she opens the paper; the writing runs thus:

"You have never been forgotten for one instant since the day I saw you surrounded in the golden glory of the sunshine by the lake.

You are too noble, too high-minded; to resent the wild worship of a man so poor and humble as myself; but, dear one, believe that no love could be truer and purer than that I feel for you. You are my muse—the inspiration of my every thought. Your devoted and unhappy,

"OSWALD."

Elsie feels an ecstasy of joy she does not reason against or seek to analyse. This man loves her. She forgets everything but that one all-absorbing fact. Brave, sensitive, and refined, she is certain he is. Has she not dreamed of his image ever since that first day they met?

"Oh, Oswald!" sobs Elsie, pressing the writing to her lips; "you have entranced me. You are cruel, but how adorable!"

Is that a step? Elsie draws in her breath to listen. Oswald, in returning home, has scaled the low garden fence, resolved to see if he can discover some traces of this sweet Elsie. He has entered the summer-house with light, careful steps. This scene is Heaven to Oswald—to find love awaking for him in the innocent heart of a girl who believes him poor.

Any risk, any absurdity, any danger, must be incurred to secure so long desired an end. To be loved for himself—ah! how impossible that has always seemed! So he disregards propriety and smiles at sermons. He is no mercenary artist, trying to entrap rich heiresses for his own selfish ends. He is Oswald Fullerton, of Herne Court and Berkeley Square, with ten thousand a year, wooing a little darling in his own way before the world spoils her, and in this case he believes the end justifies the means.

"Elsie, forgive me," he implores, standing before her, and speaking in deep, lover-like tones. "I have sought this place to be near you. I have heard and know enough of you to convince me you have a heart that can value faithfulness and devotion above riches. Oh, Elsie, I love you!"

The girl starts, and thinks of her parents—how they have set their hearts on her marrying a rich man, and how contemptuously they always alluded to struggling artists and even men of genius who happened to be poor. She glances shyly at her lover, and sees dreamy, fathomless gray eyes shaded by darkest lashes—eyes that melt and soften and change with every ripple of passing emotion and thought; a strong, determined mouth, half hidden by a smooth, brown moustache, and a tall figure bending over her that seems to promise protection, aid, and care.

"I am a man of sudden impulse and resolve," Oswald continues, seeing her look of alarmed terror fade into joy as he confesses his love, "and the first vision of your sweet face, the first words you uttered thrilled me with the ecstasy that love only interprets. Can you trust me with your future life? Will you be my own—my wife?"

"Oh, Oswald! you know that I love you," the girl sobs in reply; "but I owe a duty to my parents also. It is that makes me hesitate."

"And they will seek to separate us, Elsie? And do you not think if they love you dearly they cannot be reconciled to our marriage after it is over? Your money, darling, shall be all settled on you. I can earn quite enough to ensure our having a pretty little cottage home in the suburbs," Oswald answers, soothingly, and as if to carry his point without insurmountable difficulties.

He presses Elsie again and again to his heart, and kisses her soft, rose-bud lips, and thinks of the day when he will take her to Herne Court and present her to his friends as his wife—the only girl he has ever met with who loves him solely for himself, even as the heroine in the poem loved the Lord of Burleigh.

Elsie is very pale as Oswald pleads. She has suffered a martyrdom in her struggles at home to forget him, and the constant wear and tear of fevered thought affect her health and appetite.

"I don't feel able to live without you, Os-

wald," she says, wearily, and trembling. "I am sure separation would kill me, and they would take me away from you and, perhaps, force me in the end to marry someone else I hated."

Oswald knows that Elsie is not very strong-minded, and that weakness is never to be relied on. She turns her beautiful, dark-blue eyes on his and half sobs her consent. Oswald breathes her name again and again as if she were a saint whose intercession can alone save him. He has at last found his ideal. There would be no future bitter awakening to the knowledge that he is victimised to the wiles of a clever coquette.

"And now, darling, when shall we be married?" he asks, in a low, thrilling voice. "My Juliet, my love, how happy you have made me."

"I don't know," Elsie answers, shyly, burying her golden head on his breast and receiving more kisses.

"Well, then I will tell you," Oswald continues, revelling in the romance of the situation. "I have lodgings you know in the Portobello Road, but I should not wish to take my bride there. I'm not either quite so poor, dearest, as your parents may think—that is, I've enough to furnish our pretty cottage with."

"I adore cottages," Elsie answers, blushing, "and chickens, and plenty of flowers about."

She loves him as Francesca loved Paolo, and would rather share a garret with him than a palace with a prince.

"You shall have all that, Elsie, and more; but now to arrange our wedding-day," and then Oswald goes into necessary details, makes all clear to Elsie, and after a few tender farewell words takes his leave.

Morris that evening receives instructions which, to use his own expression, makes his hair stand on end. Apt to view Oswald in the light of a gay Lothario, this passionate love affair ending in matrimony seemed to take away his breath.

"To see master in them shabby clothes makes me quite disgusted," he mutters. "It's a worse turn than duel-fighting he's takin'. I don't think 'ere a one of those counts and barons he tried to make mince-meat of in Paris 'ud believe he's in his right senses."

A few weeks after there is loud woe and wailing within the walls of The Grange. The Misses Pemberton hear at breakfast, over Roman history and bread and butter, that their pupil, Miss Elsie Brandon, has eloped with the drawing-master, and the piteous fits of hysterics the news causes generally makes the schoolroom more resemble a convent with shrieking penitents than a room sacred to Minerva and Anglican prayers.

"We must send a telegram. We must let her parents know at once," the governesses cry, roaming from room to room looking under beds and into cupboards with the wildness of despair.

"M. Vernet warned us. He said we were to beware of handsome young masters with so many elder girls. And they will say we were careless and indiscreet," the younger sister cries, picturing that terrible Mrs. Brandon's arrival, and the shrill demands of her husband, both screaming in a conjugal duet: "Where is my child?" while echo answers "Where?"

### CHAPTER III.

#### LOVE IN A COTTAGE.

How can I live without thee?

"But the horses don't look in the least like hired ones," Elsie is saying, as she and Oswald dash forward on their bridal morn towards the fairy-like cottage he has taken and furnished for their reception.

All the details of his unconventional wedding are in character with his romantic temperament. Elsie still wears her simple blue school dress and straw hat, but there is a circlet of gold on the third finger of her left hand, and the tears and smiles on her sweet face resemble the changes

of an April morning with sunshine and rain struggling for the victory. The horses are, in truth, a pair of Oswald's fleetest bays. The carriage and coachman only are hired, and the animals seem disposed to defy all the efforts of the latter to restrain them.

"They certainly seem quite above the ordinary class of hired horses," Oswald answers, smiling, and gazing at Elsie with infinite love.

He moves the feathery wreaths of golden-brown curls from her brow, and Elsie, half terrified and half entranced at her daring venture, sobs forth a few incoherent words in which dread of parental wrath and passionate love for her husband are scarcely distinguishable.

London is soon left behind. Neat villas, streets, crescents, terraces, are passed in rapid succession, and after two bridges have been wildly dashed over, they enter a neighbourhood in which meadows smile with verdure, and where in olden times stags may have been chased by sleuth hounds, and herons starting from the river's reeds have fallen a prey to the merciless hawk.

"How lovely it all is," Elsie says, watching the deer darting through the fern and brushwood, and now and then a rabbit whirl beneath the long grass. "Oh, Oswald! if only papa and mamma would not be angry."

Elsie is still frightened of the hue and cry that will be raised after the discovery of her departure; but Oswald, spoilt from his very childhood, is only too thankful to welcome any change or novelty in a career becalmed by luxury, and so he selfishly ignores the pain and suspense he must inevitably cause.

Still a feeling of antagonism has always rankled in his mind against Mrs. Brandon, and he knows they are vulgar, wealthy people who would have no mercy on the most piteous revelations of despairing love were poverty allied with it.

"We shall soon reach our little home, my darling," Oswald says, as they turn down a narrow lane. "Humble it is, Elsie; but love will give every grace and beauty that it may lack."

Soon the horses are reined up before a cottage so simple and primitive that it seemed a specimen of the first elementary attempt in mediæval architecture. The rough porch, the quaint gables, the narrow windows, half hidden with roses and honeysuckle, all speak of several centuries ago. A neat maid-servant appears, and taking sundry wraps and Elsie's light summer shawl leads the way to the tiny passage, and Elsie and her husband follow.

"How do you like your house, Elsie?" Oswald asks, eyeing her intently. "Come into the drawing-room, child, and tell me what you think of it."

Elsie sees curious oaken timbers, grotesque carvings, but a perfect wealth of flowers everywhere—on the mantelpieces, the tables, the cabinets, exquisite groups of the rarest blossoms, orchids, and ferns have been placed in luxuriant profusion.

"It is beautiful," she answers, with parted lips, breathless with surprise. She and Oswald might have been two beings living in the reign of the Stuarts.

"And you are not disappointed with your cottage?"

"Oh, Oswald! as if you were not more to me than any home," the girl cries, throwing herself into his arms.

"Little pet, little angel, my queen," Oswald says, with drowsy warmth. "And now for our wedding-breakfast. Have you no regret for the grand array of guests, the sumptuous fare, the costly presents, the retinue of servants? Here we have only one to attend on us."

"Dinner is served, sir, please," a voice announces at the door.

"I'm sure I couldn't eat a morsel," Elsie whispers, and half turning aside with a girlish gesture.

"Then you will be ill and faint, dearest; it is hours since you've tasted anything. Come and let us see what sort of cooking and fare Mary has given us."

The dining-room is simply lovely, stained glass windows are at one end, and more flowers in a splendid *epergne* grace the table.

"Such a simple wedding-breakfast, my Elsie," Oswald says, shyly; "do you not miss the pomp and glory of the usual thing—the speeches, the apert, the wines, the presents? Come, we won't do without the wines, at any rate, I can manage that, at least, on our wedding day."

It all seems like a dream to Elsie—the shadowy trees outside the windows, the scent of blossoms, the peeps of the blue sky, the ripple of the river at the end of the lawn. The windows are open, for it is August, and the air has the heavy, drowsy warmth of the east.

As Elsie sips her moselle and finds she has been able to dissect the wing of a fowl, besides eating a few mouthfuls of salmon, a sound reaches her ears that drives all the colour from her face. Mary has just cleared the table for about the fourth time, and has placed a green-gate tart, cream and custard before her new mistress when the girl starts to her feet with a cry of terror.

"Oh, Oswald, save me! they have come," she sobs, clinging to him. "You don't know how terrible and fierce mamma can be."

"She can never take you from me now, darling," he murmurs, throwing open the door and receiving his mother-in-law almost in his arms at the porch.

Mrs. Brandon can hardly restrain herself from rushing at Oswald and throttling him. She is so large that the cottage seems to shrink before her presence to the proportions of a doll's-house. Mr. Brandon, a little man in low shoes, appears lost in her voluminous drapery and hops behind her with a face of extreme pallor resembling a prisoner on his way to execution.

"Do your duty, Brandon!" cries his terrible spouse. "Speak your mind, sir, as a man. Call to your aid the terrors of the law."

Mr. Brandon is indeed too overwhelmed to say anything; his wife sweeps majestically onward, enters the dining-room, and surveys the table and room with profound contempt.

"A pretty pigsty you've brought our girl to," she cries, fiercely, without noticing Elsie, who has rushed to her father and is sobbing in his arms begging his forgiveness, and whispering the secret of her love for Oswald in his ear. "Ah, I suspected your tricks when you refused the clothes."

"Oh, Maria, gently," says Mr. Brandon, sinking into the luxurious armchair, spreading his thin hands over his face and rather pleased with the evident tastefulness of everything.

It is all better than he expected, even including the bridegroom with his elegant, high-bred air.

"You may well say 'gently' to me, Brandon. Your child has eloped with a drawing-master—a poor, miserable professional; next door to a footman, I call it."

"We knew that you would oppose our marriage," Oswald answers, coolly folding his hands. "You made your child suffer cruelly when she half confessed her love for me months ago."

"Oh, don't think you'll ever have a penny of her money. For to get it has been your little game all through. You traded on your good looks and her softness of nature to run away with our heiress, but no drawing-master shall revel in our thousands. I'd sooner throw them into the river!" Mrs. Brandon shrieks, while Oswald merely shrugs his shoulders waiting for the tempest to pass.

"Suppose I don't want them?" he says, after a pause, while Mr. Brandon, reclining in the easy-chair that never could have been bought a penny under ten guineas, starts and thinks Maria may be too hasty, and that drawing-masters sometimes made a very pretty thing out of a fine connection.

"Elsie, come here!" Mrs. Brandon cries, authoritatively, "and leave off wheedling your silly father."

Elsie approaches her mother with less timidity. Suspense is over, and the worst has been faced.



"Don't you know that you are a foolish, wicked, ungrateful little hussey?" ends Mrs. Brandon, remembering the vulgar epithets she learnt in her youth, and which ever force their way to her lips in the height of passion.

"I love my husband," Elsie murmurs, bravely, shrinking, however, a little from the "embodied" storm—the mother who had been once wont to use a slipper with unmerciful violence.

"Is it any use crying over spilt milk?" asks the father, mildly, a philosopher under any circumstances. "Suppose we forgive them, Maria, since anger and fury won't change their destiny."

"Oh, you poor weak creature. Forgive them, and we be the laughing stock of the place."

"Take a glass of wine, Mr. Brandon?" says Oswald, inwardly blessing his father-in-law.

"I think I will," answers the little man, who sees by the label that the wine is of the very finest quality. "Elsie, child, don't cry; you are a wife now, remember; you have taken a step that will be for better for worse all your life long."

"I wish to be reconciled to you and mamma too," sobs Elsie, going round to Oswald's side.

"You are the most undutiful daughter in the world," her mother answers, severely, rising to leave. "I can do nothing, of course, without your father's sanction in the way of removing you from the care of Mr. Oswald Fullerton, the drawing-master. Just wait and see how he treats you when he finds we tie up our purse-strings."

"By-the-bye," says Oswald, a slight flush mounting to his cheek, "I think it as well to inform you, madame, that we shall not remain very long for the present at this cottage. I am obliged to visit Herne Court the week following on important business. Any communication you have to make to us will find us there."

"He's engaged to re-varnish the pictures, I suppose," Mrs. Brandon says, sotto voce, tramping out into the hall after her husband.

"Herne Court. Let me see. A fine estate in Surrey," mutters Mr. Brandon at the porch, "owned by a man called Fullerton. Any relation of yours; it's the same name?"

"There are so many Fullertons," answers Oswald, indifferently; but the flush mounts higher to his brow as Mr. Brandon turns and holds out his hand in farewell.

"You've not used us well, sir. I don't for a moment excuse your conduct, but my little girl is my dearest earthly treasure. Never mind what her mother says. I'll stand true to you through thick and thin if you make Elsie happy. Heaven bless her, I can see she loves you with all her heart. Treat her well; it's all I ask."

Mr. Brandon's eyes are full of tears as Oswald wrings his hand.

"Trust me. I prize her above all the world," Oswald answers, his fingers closing firmly over Mr. Brandon's. "Some day you will understand me better."

No more was said as Mrs. Brandon, entering the carriage without another word or glance, beckons to her husband to follow her, and then bangs the carriage-door savagely to as a relief to her feelings.

"It will all come right soon, my darling," Oswald says, soothingly, his arm resting on Elsie's shapely shoulder, and the shadows of the August sunlight falling on them like a blessing as they re-enter the cottage together.

"It was all for love's sake," mutters Elsie, as she draws her head to its natural resting place—his breast.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### MINE AND THINE.

Here love his golden shafts employs; here lights His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings.

HAVING secured his end, Oswald is naturally anxious to take up his former position again in society, and Morris congratulates himself that a runaway marriage has had a soothing influence

on his master, which he devoutly prays may continue.

"We are going to Herne Court to-day," Oswald says to Elsie, who is still unconscious of the wealth and high social standing of the man she has married, so carefully has Oswald kept the news from her.

They are both at breakfast; Elsie in a pretty tea-robe that Oswald has brought her from town, the pale cream colour hue of which harmonises well with her girlish loveliness; she is pouring out the coffee into delicate and expensive cups. The air, heavy with the scent of full-blown roses, floats into the room, and the whole picture is one of perfect happiness and repose.

"I shall be sorry to leave the dear cottage," Elsie answers, looking down; "and those people at Herne Court will make me feel nervous, Oswald. I always dread strangers, you know."

"But it will be for our good, Elsie," he answers. "I've arranged that we arrive about two o'clock to luncheon."

"What dress shall I wear, Oswald?"

"Your school one," he says, under his breath, his arm stealing round her waist.

"They would quizz me in that, Oswald; and the ladies will say I've no taste."

"How do you know there will be any ladies to receive us, Elsie?"

"Because you said there would be all sorts of balls and parties given, and tableaux vivants and dinners."

"Of course I did; well, now, run away, little woman, and make yourself ready for the journey. It's a good two hours' drive to Herne Court, and already it's past eleven."

Oswald saunters into the garden to smoke a cigar. Morris has just arrived to perform his old duties, and Elsie spies him in conversation with Oswald, and wonders who he can be. She is more surprised than ever when the identical bays dash round to the door that bowled them so swiftly to the cottage on her wedding-day; but the carriage is new; the coat of arms emblazoned on the panel excites her curiosity still more, while Morris, taking his seat by the coachman, completes her mystification.

Oswald laughs off all her questioning, and relapses into silence as they drive away. Elsie feels more and more bewildered as they enter Herne village, and notice that several of the villagers doff their caps to Oswald, and the children drop strings of buttercups from their laps as they drop humble curties.

Aged faces peering out of the windows of the almshouses Oswald's father built, smile; but Oswald talks of the solid stone mullions to the venerable looking windows and not of the people behind them.

At last they enter the approach to Herne Court. Several large dogs dash up to the carriage, and Elsie sees a magnificent stone mansion shaded by noble elm trees, while the terrace walks to the left are adorned by fine cypress trees, and several ancient cedars of Lebanon spread their quiet shade over velvet lawns.

"How splendid it is," Elsie murmurs, in a hushed voice.

The hall door is now thrown open wide. Morris springs off the box. The housekeeper, Mrs. Clive, and several servants appear. The aged butler makes a dervish-like salute. A tide of crimson rushes over Elsie's face; there is some mystery here she has not fathomed.

Oswald leads her on his arm past the rows of obsequious servants, and then he feels her body tremble violently. She almost sinks to the ground; but a strange thrill of exaltation is surging through her veins. It is impossible to doubt the truth any longer as Oswald leads her into the drawing-room, closes the door and folds her to his heart.

"It is your home, my darling, as well as mine," he cries, pressing his lips to hers and smiling into her innocent eyes. "Can you forgive me, Elsie? Will you like Herne Court as well as the cottage?"

The crimson fades from Elsie's cheeks, and she is pale as the statues on the marble tables.

"Oh, Oswald, how could I guess who you were. I cannot realise the truth. I almost

wish nothing was changed," and she burst into tears.

"Elsie, little wife, my love, I used these innocent stratagems to win you because I despaired of ever finding a true woman's heart—of ever meeting a girl who would love and cling to me for myself, regardless of my fortune. Your love stood every test, your parents' anger, my poverty, my social extinction. I shall never be tortured by doubts of my wife's devotion. The poor drawing-master has vanished, it is true, but can you not put up with his substitute?"

"I am pleased, Oswald," Elsie answers, enthusiastically. "There is no fear of future anxiety or distress for you since you are so rich—master of Herne Court."

"I rather fancy, Elsie, you and I will be one of the happiest couples in the county," he says, delightedly. "I always dreaded above everything finding myself married to a girl who loved somebody else better than she did me, and therefore would do me the honour of thinking this a gilded cage. Yes, Elsie, I used to recoil with absolute horror from the idea of entrapment and misery."

"You know how truly I love you," the girl says, drying her happy tears. "You need never doubt that, Oswald. And now I shall have to be grand, and acquire dignity to carry off all these honours and distinction. Just fancy mamma's surprise when she calls in a few days and actually finds her daughter mistress of Herne Court."

"I don't think she'll offer to buy me another suit of clothes in a hurry," Oswald answers, laughing.

When Elsie fully realises the complete change in her expectations she cannot but confess that her happiness in truth seems doubled. All that before was hazy and uncertain in the future has now emerged into a glorious sense of satisfaction and security.

"Here is an old friend waiting to be noticed," Oswald cries, as the door is softly pushed open, and Loris, the mastiff, and the means of their introduction in the first instance, rushes joyfully to his master.

"Dear old fellow. I've long forgiven him?" mutters Loris's new mistress, patting his wide, smooth head.

Then they pass through the French corridor on to the lawn, and Oswald shows Elsie the terrace and conservatories, and takes her past the fish-pond and shrubberies towards a splendid flower-garden—his own design—and which seems literally ablaze with the deep, vivid colouring of the August flowers.

After that they ramble over the mansion, and then they take a walk down winding lanes to the village, and admire the church with ivy encircling the decaying stones, and Oswald points out the stained glass window which his father presented the church with a few years ago, and says a few kind words to several aged villagers he meets as he and Elsie return homewards to a somewhat late luncheon.

A few days after a hired fly may be seen crawling slowly along the drive to Herne Court, and as it stops before the massive pillars of the hall door, a couple alight who might suggest to the imagination the notion of a comma and a full-stop—so vast is the difference between them.

Mrs. Brandon, her face flushed with anger and excitement, asks the butler if she can see Mrs. Oswald Fullerton for a few minutes, whom of course, she still believes is allowed to visit here on sufferance.

Without a word the butler leads them to the drawing-room, where Elsie, in a superb tea-robe of pale blue brocade trimmed with cream-coloured robings and edged with gold lace, is sitting, surrounded by several ladies who have recently called upon her, and who are now leaving after having sipped orange Pekoe, highly perfumed, out of tiny Pekin cups at this pleasant après-midi.

Oswald is chatting on the Egyptian hearth-rug with the vicar, when, looking suddenly

round, he perceives the entrance of the Brandons. Little Mr. Brandon takes the scene in at a glance, but his wife is not yet fully enlightened. Elsie, she can see, is dressed in the latest fashion, and really seems doing the thing in style—perhaps in the temporary absence of the mistress of Herne Court.

Elsie rises and embraces the large woman, who submits silently to the operation. Mr. Brandon follows and wrings his child's hand with an arch and delighted smile. Not a word is spoken till after the departure of the guests, then Mrs. Brandon expresses her amazement in her usual daring alap-dash style.

"You seem to have fallen on your feet, Elsie, at any rate," she says, slowly, criticising her attire. "We came to see Mr. Fullerton and you to-day on business; but perhaps you're too busy and engaged to attend to it."

Oswald rings the bell. Mrs. Brandon has politely ignored the obnoxious drawing-master. "Bring more tea to your mistress," he says, in rather loud tones, as the footman enters the room.

The Brandons start and look at each other. "Mistress!" mutters Elsie's mother, rising hastily to her feet and feeling an hysterical attack at hand.

"Yes, mistress," answers Oswald, going up to them. "My wife, Elsie, mistress of Herne Court and all it contains."

Mrs. Brandon's complexion appears decidedly the worse for the information. She attempts to speak and signally fails, but her husband answers for both.

"Such news overwhelms me," he says, in a tremulous voice. "But may I ask, sir, what need there was for so much secrecy and mystery when you might have had our consent and welcome to our daughter's hand?"

"Elsie will explain my reason; it was my test of her love," Oswald answers, smilingly. "We are ready to make true confession of all our sins. Shall we be friends?" he asks, in his charming way, as Mrs. Brandon sinks helplessly on a couch looking the very reverse of amiable.

Elsie soothes her aggrieved parent by degrees, and offers her some delicious orange Pekoe that Mrs. Brandon at last condescends to sip. Her father smooths his child's hair, and calls her his darling little girl, thankful everything has ended with so much brilliance and solace.

"Mistress of Herne Court," he repeats. "Dear, dear, who'd have thought it?"

"Does not the end justify the means?" asks Oswald, "since I now can never doubt my Elsie's love?" A.C.

## VIOLA HARCOURT; OR, PLAYING WITH HEARTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Evander," "Tempting Fortune," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XXIX.

#### THE MEETING IN THE PARK.

WHEN the sound of carriage wheels was heard on the gravel Viola childishly clapped her hands, and her face, all smiles, indicated the delight she felt.

"Oh, Miss Agnew!" she exclaimed. "Here is Bertie. I am sure it is he. Do you not congratulate me on being so happy?"

"Indeed I do," replied the companion. "I am quite anxious to know Mr. Conyers better, since I have heard you expatiate so much on his many virtues and accomplishments."

"I do talk about him, I know I do, and have done so at the risk of boring you, but you would do the same, if you had ever loved."

"I have loved?" said Miss Agnew, with a saturnine look.

"Really, you dear, quiet, sedate thing, who would have thought it! Still waters run deep, they say. Why did you break off?"

"It was not my fault."

"And you love him still?" queried Viola, watching the carriage approaching, it being visible from the window.

"On the contrary, I hate him!" replied Miss Agnew, looking more repulsive than before.

This threw a new light on her character, but the conversation faded from Viola's mind as the carriage stopped and a light elastic step was heard in this hall. The next moment Herbert appeared, and she was clasped in her lover's arms.

"Oh, Herbert, my darling. Is it really you?" she exclaimed. "If you knew how I have longed for you. The hours have been so very long."

"Business, my love, kept me. My father was unwell and I had to attend to his practice. Am I forgiven?" replied Herbert.

"I find an imaginary fault in order that I may have the pleasure of pardoning," she said.

He kissed her tenderly and led her to the sofa, while he welcomed Miss Agnew on the way.

"Tell me all the news," continued Viola. "Who is there in our set who has got married, or is dead, or had a fortune left them?"

"I can tell you of one who has lost a fortune, and that is poor Sandford Newton. It appears," replied Herbert, "that he fell into the hands of a swindler, who induced him to open a theatre, buy a newspaper and start a stud of race-horses, three of the most disastrous things an inexperienced man can do."

"What is the result?"

"Beggary, simply. The theatre is closed, the paper dead, and the horses seized for debt. He is not discouraged, however, for he has started in business."

"Indeed. What particular line has he chosen?"

"That of a private detective. He has an inquiry office in London and is making a living. I admire his energy and perseverance. Perhaps he will be better without the money, it was only a curse to him. I had a visit from him the other day and he spoke of you."

"Poor Sandford, he was good enough to admire me once."

"He does still, and he says he is watching over you at a distance," Herbert continued. "He told me that he had received private information that led him to believe Lord Turlington was plotting again and that Madame Mensies had left London suddenly for parts unknown."

Miss Agnew started and changed colour, a fact which did not escape the sharp eye of Herbert Conyers.

"Do you know Madame Mensies?" he asked.

"No, I do not know anyone of that name. It struck me as being rather a peculiar cognomen, that is all," replied the companion, regaining her self-possession.

"Have you ever been in Paris?"

"Never. I learnt my French at a boarding school at Brighton," said she. Adding, "Had I not best finish that tating, Miss Sutton? Two is company, you know, and three is none."

"As you please," answered Viola, glad to be alone with Herbert.

Miss Agnew took advantage of this permission and hastily quitted the room as if she wished to avoid any further cross-questioning.

"How strangely you look at Miss Agnew, Bertie," said Viola.

"I do not like her. Sandford had heard of your engaging her. He knows everything, these detective fellows always do, and he advised me to be on my guard, for your sake."

"What nonsense, she is a good little thing, and very attentive to me."

"It is her duty to be so, and shows that she knows her place, but I am here to protect you, and we will not frighten ourselves with shadows. What a beautiful estate this is."

"Is it not charming. I wander about all day and never get tired. It is a paradise."

"How I long to fish in that big lake. The fishes were jumping up as I came along," exclaimed Herbert, who was an enthusiastic angler.

"So you shall, dear. There is a room, dear, quite an arsenal, it is full of guns and pistols and fishing tackle. Let me show you. Come and choose a rod and line for yourself. You shall see what a good hostess I can be?"

She rose gleefully to show him the place where Lord Turlington had kept all his implements of the chase.

"But I cannot leave you, dearest, so soon after my arrival. You will be jealous of the poor fisher," he said.

"I! Not at all. You will not be gone long, Bertie, and we shall have all the long evening together. We dine in the country at four, you know."

Herbert allowed himself to be persuaded, for there was nothing he was so fond of as fishing. He selected his tackle and ordered a servant to get him some bait. He refused the offer of any attendance, as he liked to fish alone. Fishing is a solitary sport, and as a rule disciples of Isaac Walton prefer to be by themselves. It was a lovely morning.

He wished Viola good-bye, promising not to be more than two hours, if the sport proved ever so good, and started across the park for the great lake which he had heard was well preserved and full of fish. The sun was shining brightly, the may was out on the hawthorns and the chestnuts were already covered with a wreath of feathery white.

When he reached the side of the lake he chose a likely spot and began to joint his rod, when he found himself confronted by a stranger, who had been sitting almost at his feet without his noticing it.

"Who are you, sir?" he demanded.

The stranger, who was Lord Turlington, but so effectually disguised as to be unrecognizable, even by one who knew him well, regarded his interrogator superciliously.

"I do not see," he replied, "that I am under any obligation to answer that question?"

"This is private property and you have no right here."

"By what right do you order me away," asked his lordship.

"I am a friend of the lady to whom the property belongs," answered Herbert.

"Perhaps you are the cur whom they say is going to marry her for her money. A nice fellow truly to talk to a man."

Herbert was of a hasty temper and could not bear this sneer.

"By heaven!" he exclaimed. "No one shall say that to me with impunity. I am going to marry Miss Sutton, but not for her fortune. Retract your words or take the consequence of a refusal?"

"I shall not do anything of the sort."

"Then I will first thrash you and afterwards throw you into the water, to teach you civility?"

"I doubt if you have the ability to do either one or the other," said his lordship.

Herbert's only reply to this defiant speech was to raise his fist and strike Lord Turlington forcibly in the face. His features were immediately stained with crimson, and assumed a diabolical expression.

"Confusion! A blow!" he cried.

The next moment he plunged his hand into his breast and drew forth a life preserver, with which he aimed at Herbert's head, striking him on the temple and causing him to stagger wildly, beating the air with his hands.

"Take that and that, rash fool," he hissed through his set teeth, as he struck him again and again.

Covered with blood, Herbert Conyers fell to the ground, uttering a deep groan, and lay motionless, stretched out upon his back. Lord Turlington was about to hurry away, for he imagined that he had killed him in his passion, but a sudden thought seemed to strike him.



Kneeling down on the ground he tore open his coat and felt in his breast-pocket. His search was rewarded by the discovery of a paper, tied with red tape. Hastily opening it, he cast his eyes over its pages.

"The will! the will!" he cried in triumph. "I did not expect this. She has given it to him and he carries the precious document about with him. I should have deemed no safe strong enough for its protection."

Hastily secreted the will about his person he darted under some trees and left the park by the most unfrequented path, so that he might encounter no one.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## SANDFORD MARRIED.

The afternoon glided quickly away, but the fair mistress of Tarrington Hall did not take any note of time. She was thinking of Herbert Conyers and her newly-found happiness—he was here at last; he had come down to visit her at her own splendid mansion.

How foolish she had been to fight against all this joy, which she might have had long ago if she had not been so obstinate; but it had all come right at last; and, after all, everything is well that ends well. Soon she would be a blushing bride, and instead of going through the world alone, unloving and unloved, she would have someone to look up to and respect.

What was her fortune and possessions to her when she had the man of her choice to share them with her? Absolutely nothing. She wished to give Herbert everything; and, in return for her generosity, all she wanted, all she asked, was his companionship and his love. Life was beginning to assume a rosier aspect than it had ever presented to her admiring gaze.

She took a fierce pride and delight in living, because she had something to live for, and it was with a proud, erect bearing that she walked through her ancestral halls and gazed upon the portraits of her relations who had shed lustre on the name of Tarrington.

Going into her bedroom, she tried on dress after dress, to see which was the most becoming, for she wanted to don one which would please Herbert's eye, and make him think her very beautiful.

While thus engaged, she was disturbed by the entry of Miss Agnew, who gazed admiringly upon a black satin skirt, trimmed with white lace, which she had just put on.

"How charming!" she exclaimed. "Black becomes you so much."

"I think so, too," replied Viola, turning half round and surveying herself in the mirror. "Herbert always likes black; he says it is so ladylike."

"Yes. It suits some people. Though I prefer dark blue," answered Miss Agnew. "I generally wear black silk or cashmere, because it lasts longer and is cheaper. People in my position cannot afford to come out in all the colours of the rainbow."

"Poverty seems to distress you, Miss Agnew," remarked Viola. "When I was poor, as I dare say you have heard I once was, I did not mind it so much, except when my stepmother ill-treated me."

"Yes, I have heard a great deal about you, it was in the papers," replied the companion. "With regard to your question, I must confess that to me poverty, though no crime, is very disagreeable. I would do almost anything for money. It is so hard on women that careers are not open to them as to men. What can we do? We are helpless."

"To a certain extent we are, until we get married," Viola said, her face suffusing itself with blushes.

"Ah, that is where you are fortunate. We do not all marry the man of our choice," replied Miss Agnew, with the bitter tone she occasionally adopted.

"Ah, that reminds me that I have left my

dear Bertie all alone quite long enough," exclaimed Viola. "He is naughty to stay away from me such a while, especially after we have been separated for weeks. I will go to the lake and scold him."

"Shall I accompany you?"

"If you please. Hand me a lace shawl and a garden hat, let us make haste. It is so nice to have a little quarrel with one you love, just for the pleasure of making it up afterwards."

Miss Agnew assisted Viola to attire herself, and putting a plain straw hat coquettishly on her head, she was ready to accompany her. The sun had gone down, and a slight mist was rising from the grass as they wended their way across the park. The deer lazily cropped the grass or munched the young tender shoots of fern which were springing up green and feathery.

"I wonder where he is, and how many fish he has caught," observed Viola, who took a childish interest in everything that Herbert did, thinking that no one could do it as well as himself.

This was natural—for, being her affianced husband, he was also her hero, and his deeds were magnified in her eyes. When they reached the confines of the lake they saw the trees that here and there fringed its banks, mirrored in its placid depths, but the eye in vain sought the figure of the solitary angler.

"Where is he?" cried Viola, in perplexity. "Perhaps he is tired and gone back to the Hall by another route, which accounts for our missing him."

"Look, dear Miss Agnew," said the companion. "There is a man on the grass, perhaps he can give us some information."

Viola thought so, too, and rapidly approached the man who was crouching upon his haunch. Suddenly she halted abruptly and uttered a prolonged, piercing shriek.

"Oh, heaven! It is Bertie!" she exclaimed.

"Bertie—mean Mr. Conyers? How—where?" asked Miss Agnew.

"Right before me. He is covered with blood. Oh, good gracious, they have murdered him! Run for help; send messengers at once. Order a doctor; do everything. Go quickly, or you may yet save him. Please make haste. I shall not forget your kindness!"

Miss Agnew at once set off for the Hall, and Viola, recovering herself, gazed at the body on the dew-spangled grass and carefully examined Herbert, who laid still and motionless but beautiful as a statue. She got some water from the lake in her hands and dashed it in his pale face, hoping to revive him.

The application of the cold water had the desired effect, for he opened his eyes and sighed deeply. He had lost a great deal of blood, but the effusion had stopped after a time, of its own accord.

Had the hemorrhage continued, he must have bled to death. As it was he felt very weak and extremely prostrated, yet he was sensible enough to recognise Viola, and he smiled faintly, as he murmured in a feeble voice:

"My own. Where am I? What has happened?"

"How glad I am you can speak, dear Herbert," she replied. "It is not for me to tell what has taken place. I know nothing. You did not come, so I went in search of you and thought you were dead?"

"Ah, yes. I went to fish. It is coming back to me now. I remember having an altercation with a man here. He struck me with a bludgeon. I fell, and since then all is a blank."

He tried to get up, raising himself on his elbow.

"How my head aches," he continued. "But I will go home and the doctor will give me something of a strengthening nature."

He got up with difficulty and reeled like a drunken man.

"You are not strong enough, dearest," exclaimed Viola, in great concern. "Bear upon me."

Herbert stretched out his hand.

"Where are you?" he asked. "I cannot see you, my pet. A mist swims before my eyes. What

is this? I—I am fainting, the earth is giving way beneath my feet?"

He made an effort to keep his equilibrium, but failed. The dizziness came on again and he fell prostrate at her feet, a second time insensible. The fall caused his wounds to break out bleeding afresh, and sick at heart with horror, Viola busied herself in tearing up the skirt of her dress and binding up the hurts.

It was a great relief when the men despatched by Miss Agnew came upon the scene, bearing a door which they had hastily torn from its hinges. On this they placed the body and conveyed it to the Hall, where, thanks to a ready messenger and a quick horse, a doctor was already in waiting.

The latter, finding the sufferer conveyed to bed, and after dressing his wounds, said that he feared there was commotion of the brain. He did not anticipate a fatal termination to his illness, but he prescribed quiet and strict attention, which Viola understood should be given him.

For a few days he was in imminent peril. Then he began to mend slowly. He was not permitted to talk, and for fear of exciting him Viola was only permitted to see him once daily.

The attack was of such a mysterious nature that Viola could not help thinking Lord Tarrington had something to do with it. She remembered the strange warning which Sandford Newton had given Herbert before he quitted town, and she became apprehensive for her own safety.

There was little doubt that the wretch who had so barbarously assaulted Conyers, had left him for dead, and the most effectual way of injuring her was to attack her through the man she loved.

Being absolutely friendless, she resolved to write to Sandford Newton and so far trespass on his good nature as to ask him to come down to the Hall. He had shown that he had some estimable points in his character and that time and experience of the world had cured him of many faults incidental to youth.

She offered to compensate him for any loss he might sustain in his business, putting the offer in the delicate way of requesting him to act as private detective on her behalf, at any salary he chose to demand. The answer came by return of post.

He said that he accepted her offer with many thanks, and that it was the more agreeable to him as he had just got married and was anxious to go somewhere in the country for a few weeks to spend the honeymoon.

He added that he would take the liberty of introducing his wife to Viola, feeling sure that she would have no objection, as the lady was an old friend of hers. This puzzled Viola very much and she waited impatiently for their arrival, wondering what sort of a girl had fallen in love with Sandford, who had been so unfortunate in his matrimonial ventures, having been refused by so many eligible young ladies.

When Miss Agnew heard from Viola that a detective was coming to reside at the Hall, she laughed at her fears, telling her that it was an unnecessary expense, and advising her to send him away again, for she was afraid it would interfere with her own plans. But Viola was firm.

She felt that she could rely upon Sandford, and should experience more peace of mind if he were in the house. He arrived by an early train from London. The carriage was sent to meet him and she received him and his wife in the hall. The lady wore a thick veil, through which it was impossible to recognise her features. Standing stiff and erect she waited for an introduction.

(To be Continued.)

An exhibition and market of machinery, implements, and material used or sold by printers, stationers, paper-makers, and kindred traders, is to be held at the Agricultural Hall, on Monday, July 5th, and five following days, under the patronage of the Lord Mayor.



[WATCHED.]

### PAYING THE PENALTY.

THE night was a wild one to be abroad in, with blinding gusts of snow and sleet driving from the north-east, and Dr. Cyril Jerome was quite startled to see a woman burst unceremoniously into his office. She was out of breath with haste or excitement, and her eyes shone strangely under their grizzled overhanging brows.

"Come!" she panted, seizing him eagerly by the arm. "My mistress is dying! Oh, for Heaven's sake, come quickly."

Though young in his profession, Dr. Jerome was not unaccustomed to these sudden calls. In a moment he had drawn on his coat and hat, and was ready to follow her. She seemed indifferent to the storm, though it drove full in her face.

Hurrying on with feverish rapidity, she at length paused before a large, handsome house, and opened the street-door with a night-key. Dr. Jerome found himself in a spacious, well-lighted hall. The woman hastily threw off her dripping outer garments, and motioned her companion to do the same.

"My mistress is upstairs," she said, almost in a whisper. "Do not lose a moment."

The yielding velvet scarcely made a sound under their feet. On gaining the landing above, the woman turned quickly to the right and

paused at a door that stood slightly ajar. A young girl, evidently a servant, stood there, both hands resting upon her heart. Dr. Jerome's strange guide drew back, trembling visibly.

"Oh, Lizzie!" she cried out. "Is my lady worse?"

"Worse? She is dead!"

A terrible cry broke from the woman's lips.

"Dead! Then may Heaven forgive her murderers—I never will."

It was a beautiful room, all lace and velvet and handsome upholstery. The woman staggered forward a few steps, and flung herself beside the couch. The rigid outlines of a human form could be seen under the silken coverlet.

"Oh, Miss Eloise, I would have died to save you."

Then came a stormy burst of sobs. Dr. Jerome drew nearer, vaguely troubled and uneasy. The next instant he beheld a picture that remained vividly in his memory for many a long day thereafter.

On the couch lay a young and beautiful girl. At first sight she looked like a figure carved in marble, white, still, cold, and inexpressibly lovely. Ringlets of brown hair floated over the pillow, and long curling locks swept the waxen cheeks. Her delicate lips wore a shadowy smile, at once touching and bewildering.

"Is there no hope?" said the woman, suddenly looking up. "Is my mistress really dead?"

Without waiting for an answer, she flung back the covers with a quick, fierce gesture, and laid her hand on the girl's heart. As she did so a change swept over her expressive face. "Good heavens!" she shrieked. "There is life here—life, life!" and she fell back almost fainting with excitement.

It was even so. Dr. Jerome himself distinguished a faint, fluttering throb that gave evidence all the functions of life had not been suspended. But was there sufficient vitality upon which to build a single hope?

"Save her! You must," cried the woman. "It is so terrible for her to perish like this."

"I will do what I can. But you must not count upon the result."

It was no time to ask questions. Nothing short of immediate action would avail. Dr. Jerome glanced hastily over the array of medicine bottles on the table, and instantly made up his mind to a somewhat hazardous experiment.

"Prepare a hot bath of mustard water," he said, "and have the facilities at hand for gradually raising its temperature to almost a boiling heat. In no other way can the circulation be restored."

His order was quickly obeyed. A loose dressing-gown was thrown round the patient, and she was lifted by the two servants and plunged into the bath that had been so hastily prepared. A short interval of suspense followed. Slowly a slight tinge of colour stole into the girl's waxen cheeks. The beating of her heart quickened perceptibly.

"Will she live?" breathed the woman, anxiously, observant of every sign.

"Wait. I cannot tell."

He forced stimulants between her teeth, had the temperature of the bath increased, and watched the result with the interest a true physician always feels in the welfare of his patients. Soon her pulse grew stronger, she began to breathe heavily and painfully. With every changing symptom he gathered fresh hope.

Presently he had her restored to bed, and rubbed vigorously by the two attendants. A fluttering sigh heaved her bosom, and at length she opened her eyes and said, in a weak voice:

"Have I been ill?"

"Yes," Dr. Jerome answered. "But you are better now. Don't be alarmed."

The older woman uttered a suppressed cry. Tears were running down her cheeks like rain. She had lost all control over herself.

"Heaven be praised!" she ejaculated. "It is too great happiness to hear you speak again, Miss Eloise."

The sick girl turned her head on the pillow.

"Is it you, Mrs. Burt? You are my friend—I am glad to have you near."

Then she closed her eyes and fell back as if exhausted.

"Where is Eugene?" she said, presently, in a thick voice. "Is my husband here?"

Husband! Dr. Jerome stared. He thought the girl's brain must be bewildered.

"He was called away," Mrs. Burt answered. "But he will soon be back again. Hush, darling, do not talk any more. It is too exhausting."

She moved slowly away from the couch. Dr. Jerome followed. He felt himself groping in the midst of a deepening mystery.

"That child is not married. It cannot be," he exclaimed.

Mrs. Burt nodded, giving him a glance that was at once penetrating and imploring.

"She has been a wife for nearly a year. But to me she is Miss Eloise still, the child I helped to nurse."

"Why is not her husband with her at a time like this?"

"He will be here soon enough," the woman answered, between her teeth. "I'd keep him away for ever if I could."

"What do you mean?"

A quick shudder ran through her frame. "I cannot explain, it would not be wise. But



oh, sir, don't desert my mistress! You have brought her back to life, and now you must see that no harm befalls her. Heaven must have sent me to you to-night. I felt it was our only hope."

"How long has your mistress been ill?"  
"For weeks. It has seemed like a slow decline. But she grew suddenly worse this afternoon. The regular physician left her at dark, he said he could do no more. Oh, sir, it seemed horrible to give her up coolly. And yet I was glad to have him go. I never trusted him. When the paroxysms came on, I left Lizzie in charge, and came for you. Heaven be praised that—"

At this instant the door-bell rung. Mrs. Burt broke off abruptly, a startled expression on her face.

"It is my master, Eugene Luttrell," she whispered. "He was away on business. The doctor sent him a despatch late in the afternoon. And now he is here."

Her voice had a strange sound. She was trembling with dread and apprehension. Suddenly she seized Dr. Jerome's arm and eagerly added:

"Promise me one thing—that you will not forsake my mistress while she is so ill. They will do their best to get rid of you. But don't mind them. She is lost if you give her up, lost for ever!"

There was something singularly impressive in the woman's looks and manner. What did she mean? Dr. Jerome felt a cold chill of horror creep round his heart.

"Promise me," she repeated, feverishly.

He could no longer resist.

"I do promise," he said, speaking the words with unwitting solemnity.

There was another peal at the bell. This time a very impatient one, and she hurried away without a word. After a moment's hesitation, he turned and followed.

Just as he reached the landing, a tall, handsome man, with a dark and somewhat sinister-looking face, was ushered into the lower hall. Dr. Jerome leaned over the balustrade, staring and listening.

"Eloise? How is she?" the man demanded, in hoarse but eager accents. "Tell me the worst—I can bear it."

"She lives," Mrs. Burt briefly answered.

He stared, and muttered something under his breath. Was he disappointed at the news he heard?

"I had a message from Dr. Artless," he said, after a pause. "He told me to hasten home—that my wife would not live the night out."

"She has rallied," the woman answered, still speaking with cold brevity.

"Rallied? Impossible!"

The tone was enough to freeze one's blood. Dr. Jerome heard no more, however. At this instant a slight rustling sound caught his ear, and a lady came with a soft gliding step down the corridor at his left. She was dark, beautiful, majestic.

She had almost reached Dr. Jerome's side before her glance fell on his motionless figure. She drew back pale and startled, an indefinable expression creeping over her perfect face, as she demanded, breathlessly:

"Who are you? What are you doing here?"

"I was summoned to attend the lady who is ill," he replied. "I am a physician."

Eugene Luttrell and Mrs. Burt came up the stairs in season to hear both question and answer. The former seemed surprised and excited, and darted an angry look at the servant.

"My mistress was growing worse every minute," Mrs. Burt said, sullenly. "I could not sit tamely down and see her die."

"It was you who took the liberty to call in this man?"

"Yes."

"Idiot! You might at least have sent for the physician who has the case in charge."

The woman disclaimed to reply. Turning silently, she made her way to the sick-room, and the others followed. There was a slight move-

ment on the couch as they entered, and Eloise held out her hand with a little cry.

"Eugene!"

The man went forward rather reluctantly, and touched his lips to her forehead.

"You are better," he said; "so much better than I expected to find you."

"Yes. I feel myself growing stronger every minute. Oh, Eugene, I did not want to die!"

The pathos in her tone might have melted a heart of adamant, but Eugene Luttrell only looked round the room with a tigerish gleam in his handsome eyes.

"You have wrought a miracle, doctor," he said. "Pray tell me how you accomplished it?"

Smooth as was the tone, Dr. Jerome detected a hidden sneer behind it.

"The remedies employed were very simple ones."

"Will my wife live?"

"I hope for the best."

Eugene's eyes met those of the lady in a furtive glance.

"You hear, Juanita?" he said, quickly. "We have been uselessly alarmed, it seems. The good doctor thinks Eloise will recover."

A deathly pallor overspread the woman's face.

"Thank Heaven!" she exclaimed, trying to control herself. "It is like welcoming one back from the grave."

Dr. Jerome thought her tone lacked sincerity. Did she secretly regret the turn for the better the case had taken?

"I shall remain with my patient through the night," he said, abruptly seating himself beside the couch. "It will not be safe to leave her."

He laid an involuntary emphasis on the word "safe" that caused the woman to look at him curiously.

"It is not necessary," she said. "The regular physician can be called in. He has treated Mrs. Luttrell for some time, and understands her case better than a stranger. Is it not so, Eugene?"

"Yes," he answered. "It would hardly be courteous to dismiss Dr. Artless at this late day and give the case into other hands."

Dr. Jerome felt himself tremble with excitement. Would the pair persist in depriving the poor, dying victim of her last chance of life?

"Of course, you can do as you like to-morrow," he said, quickly. "But this lady's life is in the balance—I have helped her already—and she may relapse into her former condition if you compel me to leave her to-night."

Mr. Luttrell looked annoyed. A slight flush rose to his forehead, but before he could speak the sick girl suddenly opened her eyes and said, slowly:

"Please, Eugene, let the man remain. I like him so much better than I do Dr. Artless. He has done me good—put new life into my veins, as it were. But for him I must have died."

"Of course it shall be as you wish, darling. Pray do not excite yourself."

"Thank you."

Shortly afterwards Dr. Jerome was left alone with his patient. He waited until she seemed to sleep, then approached the table on which stood the medicines prescribed by his predecessor and slowly examined the bottles and glasses one by one.

Nothing was wrong with them so far as he could discover. They were mostly stimulants, and of the sort any regular physician would prescribe in a case of extreme debility. Nevertheless, he gathered all the medicines up, emptied the glasses into the grate, and prepared a few simple remedies of his own.

Afterwards he threw himself into an easy-chair, and for some time closely watched his patient. She continued to sleep, her breathing becoming more even and regular every moment. It was wonderful what a change a few short hours had made in her condition.

In the position he had taken, Dr. Jerome's back was towards the table where the glasses

of medicine had been left. Right before him, just across the couch, a large mirror reflected all the opposite side of the room. The table stood close by a curtained arch that evidently communicated with a room beyond.

Suddenly he observed a slight rustling movement of the curtain, and slowly a white, jewelled hand—a woman's hand—was thrust from the folds, dropped something like a fine powder into the nearest glass, and was stealthily withdrawn.

The whole startling scene had been perfectly reproduced in the mirror. Dr. Jerome sat as if spell-bound, a cold chill creeping round his heart. There could be no doubt as to the significance of what he had beheld.

"This is horrible!" he muttered, rousing himself at length. "They would murder the poor young thing before my eyes."

Rising precipitately, he seized the glass which was half filled with a composing draught that had been prepared only a few minutes before, and flung it after the others in the open grate.

He scarcely knew how the night wore on afterwards. It seemed like a dream. With the first glimpse of dawn Mrs. Burt came gliding silently into the room. She stood beside the couch and eagerly looked at her young mistress a moment before speaking.

"She is better; there is more colour in her face, and she sleeps serenely," the woman said, then. "Oh, sir, may Heaven reward you for saving the life of this poor innocent. It is like a miracle."

Dr. Jerome drew nearer.

"I have brought my patient through a terrible crisis," he said. "Now her future rests in your hands rather than in mine."

"How?"

"You can be constantly near to watch over her, and I am denied that privilege."

Their eyes met for a moment. Mrs. Burt shuddered convulsively.

"I know what you mean," she said, trembling. "I will not pretend I do not. The same horrible suspicion has crossed your mind that I have carried in mine for days and days. Oh, it is dreadful!"

"What can be done?"

"I know not. I have studied the problem again and again. The mere thought of what is going on drives me wild sometimes. But I am helpless—powerless. Of what use would it be to accuse the guilty? I can prove nothing. Who would believe me?"

Dr. Jerome thought of the proof that had passed through his own hands, and been recklessly thrown away. Ah, why had he not kept the glass Mrs. Luttrell's enemies had tampered with so boldly?

"We must have time to consider," he said, after a brief pause. The fitting course is sure to suggest itself. Meanwhile keep a close watch over your mistress, and above all see that nothing passes her lips that can by any possibility have been meddled with."

"You can trust me, sir. I did what I could before, but it was impossible to be sure of the medicine the doctor gave. Sometimes he administered it himself, sometimes it was Miss Juanita. They managed everything between them. Besides, I only suspected something wrong, you know, and—"

"This lady you call Miss Juanita—who is she?" the doctor interrupted.

"Juanita Diaz. She is of Spanish descent on her father's side; her mother was a Luttrell. She came here from Cuba some five or six months ago; she is master's cousin at the second remove, I believe."

"She has taken up her abode here?"

"Yes," the woman answered, wringing her hands. "Oh, sir, it was a sad day that brought that Delilah to our happy home. She was poor and friendless—my master could do no less than take her in. He has been her slave almost from the first. Would she had never crossed this threshold."

There was no opportunity to say more. At this moment Eugene Luttrell himself entered

the chamber. He looked pale and anxious as he bent over his wife, and Dr. Jerome could not help mentally querying how far he was guilty for what had occurred.

It was considerably later before Juanita Dias made her appearance. By that time Eloise was wide awake. She clung helplessly to her husband's hand, as though half afraid to let him go. Juanita's brow contracted at the sight, but she soon controlled herself.

"How bright and well you are looking this morning, Eloise," she exclaimed, advancing with a dazzling smile. "The good physician here has wrought wonders. He must be quite a magician."

"So he is," returned the poor child. "I will have no one else hereafter. Dr. Artless could not have helped me so soon."

"Perhaps not."

Dr. Jerome saw her black eyes and a swift glance toward the table where the medicine stood. She missed the glass that was gone, and noticed its fragments in the grate, but a slight contraction of the muscles about her mouth was the only sign of any apprehension she may have felt. When Dr. Jerome rose to depart, presently Juanita followed him into the corridor.

"You are to pay no attention to the preference Mrs. Luttrell has expressed for your services," she said, in a rather nervous tone of voice. "The poor child does not know her own mind—this illness has quite upset her. It is better that Dr. Artless should attend her hereafter as before."

"Very well. When Mrs. Luttrell herself dismisses me I will cease to come."

The woman gave him an angry look.

"Consider this a dismissal," she said.

"I decline to do so. The case is a peculiar one—it has greatly interested me. I do not think it could be safely given into the hands of the physician you have mentioned."

He spoke the words deliberately, looking her straight in the face. A lurid light flashed from her eyes, but she turned away without making any response. His quiet determination had intimidated her a little.

Other efforts were made subsequently to get rid of Dr. Jerome, though without success. He went every day to see his patient, often remaining for hours, that Mrs. Burt might seek needed rest. One of the other remained constantly in the sick room.

Eloise's recovery was exceedingly rapid. In a week's time she was able to sit up, and even move about the room. There was something even pathetic in the way she clung to Dr. Jerome. Any reference to his dismissal well-nigh sent her into convulsions. He had saved her life, and she seemed to think that he still stood between her and the grave.

It was even so. Nothing but his constant care and watchfulness, and Mrs. Burt's unwearied efforts, preserved her from a violent death at the hands of her enemies. As the days wore on Dr. Jerome kept a covert watch upon Mrs. Luttrell and Juanita Dias. There could be no doubt but the two were completely infatuated with each other. It was not so easy to determine, however, how far the husband was culpable for the attempt upon the life of his wife.

During all this while Dr. Jerome was constantly pursued by a nervous anxiety concerning his patient's safety. At any moment the attempt to poison her might be resumed, this time with drugs that were speedy and sure in their effect.

What should he do under the circumstances? Denounce the would-be murderers, and have her withdrawn from their protection? At last a little incident decided his course. One morning, while on the way to visit his patient, he almost stumbled against Mrs. Burt, who was hurrying blindly along the street.

"Is it you?" she exclaimed, drawing a quick breath as she recognised him.

"What has happened?" he inquired, taking alarm at once. "Why have you left your mistress?"

"Miss Juanita sent me on an errand. There

was no one else to go. It was only a ruse to get me out of the way—I know, I feel it. Oh, sir, go on, go quickly, and save my mistress, or the wretches will take advantage of this opportunity to kill her!"

The same fear struck a sudden chill to the doctor's heart.

"It was wrong to leave her, even for a moment."

"Master was there—he, too, bade me."

There was no time to say more. Dr. Jerome ran on hastily, entered the Luttrell residence, and went upstairs unannounced. The door of the sick-room stood ajar, and, hearing the sound of voices within, he paused almost involuntarily to listen.

"Juanita has sent you up some gruel, my dear," Eugene Luttrell was saying, half-coaxingly. "She prepared it with her own hands, and declares it is delicious. Try it, and see for yourself."

"I am not hungry," Eloise answered.

"No matter. You must eat, or you will never get strong. Taste the gruel."

Dr. Jerome would have sprung forward and dashed to the ground the bowl Mr. Luttrell held, but there was no necessity. Eloise sat in an easy-chair, near the window, in the direct range of his vision. He saw her put up one hand to push the bowl away, and drop her head wearily against the cushions.

"Put it on the table," she said. "I may feel like eating by-and-by."

Mr. Luttrell obeyed, and, after lingering a moment longer, left the room by the draped archway. Dr. Jerome only waited to be sure he was really gone, then went in hurriedly. He found Eloise looking paler than usual, and a little frightened.

Without saying a word he took a clean phial from the table, filled it with gruel from the bowl, and placed the phial securely in his breast-pocket. Eloise watched every movement with dilating eyes.

"Why did you do that?" she demanded, in a whisper.

"Should he tell her? He looked at the pretty, helpless young creature, a strange pity in his gaze. Was she strong enough to bear the revelations it was in his power to make.

"You can tell me," she said, reading the expression of his face. "I am not the weak child you think me."

He went nearer and sat down beside her.

"I will tell you, Mrs. Luttrell. It is, perhaps, my duty. But you must nerve yourself to hear something very distressing."

"I am prepared for it," she said, very low.

"Is it possible that you know already?" he gasped, struck by a sudden conviction.

She covered her face with her hands and kept it hidden for several seconds.

"I have not been blind to what is going on about me," she said, at length. "I tried to be, but it was of no use. I saw too many things to excite doubt and distrust. But I have kept my apprehensions to myself."

So she had. Dr. Jerome could but marvel at her self-command. He had never for one moment dreamed that she had grown suspicious of the guilty drama that was being enacted.

"My illness has developed many peculiar symptoms," she went on, "and I could not help considering them thoroughly after being saved, through your efforts, from an untimely death. You can speak without disguise."

Dr. Jerome kept his eyes fixed intently on her face.

"Do you know what I intend to do with this?" he said, tapping the pocket that held the phial.

"You mean to ascertain if the gruel has been tampered with."

"Exactly. I shall take it to an analytic chemist, and get his opinion."

Eloise shuddered.

"Let me go with you," she said, rising suddenly, with both hands held to her heart. "I am strong enough, you can call a close carriage. Quick! we must not lose a moment. Oh, don't

refuse me, I have suffered so much during the last few weeks! The horror of my doubts is killing me. I cannot endure further suspense. I cannot!"

She stood before him with such an eager look of pleading on her face as he could not withstand. A crisis had come, why seek to stem the current?

"It shall be as you wish," he said, snatching a shawl from one of the chairs and folding it around her. "You have a right to know the worst."

He had to go only a few steps from the door to secure a carriage. No one saw them leave the house, and in a very few moments they stood in the laboratory of a well-known chemist in another street. The analysis was made immediately, and its result announced.

"The gruel contains a deadly poison but little known, though often used in Cuba," the chemist said. "A very small quantity of this mixture, if taken into the stomach, would be sufficient to produce death."

Eloise heard all without shrinking. Not until she was in the carriage again, alone with Dr. Jerome, did she give expression to her anguish.

"He—my husband—must have known," she cried, then. "How could he be so cruel?"

Dr. Jerome made no attempt to comfort her. After the force of her anguish had been spent he took her hand and said, kindly:

"There is no longer anything to conceal. You know the full extent of the danger that has menaced you. Will you go back to your ruined home and fall a victim to these wretches?"

"Where else can I go?"

"Have you no friends?"

"Not one to whom I could apply in such an emergency."

Dr. Jerome reflected a moment, then said: "My mother lives in another part of the city. I will take you to her if you wish. She would gladly receive you, and Mrs. Burt could join you there."

The poor thing seemed to have no mind of her own. She was utterly overwhelmed, and could only wring her hands and sob, under her breath:

"He wanted me out of the way. He helped along that wicked woman's purpose. How dreadful! Oh, Eugene, Eugene!"

Compelled to exercise his own judgment in the case, Dr. Jerome drove at once to his mother's residence. She was a good, tender-hearted woman, and he had only to say that Eloise was a patient in great trouble to insure care and sympathy.

All the remainder of that day Eloise lay in a darkened chamber, weak, ill, and hysterical, with Mrs. Jerome watching as tenderly as an own mother by her bedside. The ordeal through which she had passed had left her utterly exhausted.

Dr. Jerome had only remained long enough to see her made comfortable. It was with some secret misgivings that he returned to his office. No one could foresee the course Eugene Luttrell was likely to pursue under the circumstances.

"Of course he will suspect the part I have played in his wife's disappearance," the young doctor said to himself; "he may be very violent. I must be prepared for anything."

Mr. Luttrell did not make his appearance until the next day, however. Then he strode into the office looking so haggard and pale that Dr. Jerome felt a momentary pity for the man.

"Eloise—where is she?" he hoarsely demanded.

As there was no immediate reply, he caught the doctor fiercely by the arm, adding:

"I know it was you who advised her to go away. You feared that Juanita or I would murder her. It has been palpable to us both for some time that you were suspicious of us."

"And with reason," Dr. Jerome calmly said.

The man uttered a stifled cry.

"Whatever has been the case in the past,



there is no longer any cause for apprehension. I have been a blind idiot, but I am awake now. What a loathsome creature I must appear in the eyes of Eloise. May Heaven forgive me! Take me to her at once; that I may go down on my knees and implore her pardon."

He struck his hands sharply together. There could be no doubt of his sincerity; remorse and contrition were written in every line of his haggard face.

"Do not hesitate," he resumed, with a ghastly laugh. "The house is rid of that wicked woman, otherwise I should not be here. I shall never see her again."

Dr. Jerome could only yield to the force of circumstances. Two hours later he was back again at his mother's house, and had ushered Eugene Luttrell into the drawing-room.

"Remain here," he briefly said. "I will prepare your wife to receive you."

He closed the door, and passed on to the family room beyond. Eloise stood facing him as he entered, one hand pressed tightly to her side. She was pallid and trembling, and leaned heavily upon Mrs. Jerome, who stood beside her.

"Eugene is here?" she said, in an eager whisper. "I heard his step; he has come for me."

"Yes. Will you see him?"

A look was her only answer. Dr. Jerome led her to the drawing-room door, and waited until she had passed within. He heard a long, agonising cry, then all was still.

Dr. Jerome was not surprised to see Eloise emerge from the drawing-room a half hour later leaning upon her husband's arm. She looked pale, but determined. He knew before a single word had passed between them that her mind was made up to her future course.

"Eugene wishes me to go home with him," she said, her sweet voice trembling a little, "and I have consented. He is full of remorse for what has occurred. My place is by his side, that I may comfort and encourage him. All has been forgiven; I believe he will live true to me hereafter."

Dr. Jerome felt secret misgivings, but it was not for him to interpose. After all, the man's shallow and faithless nature might be purified by this good woman's constancy. Whatever nobility was in it must necessarily be drawn out.

"Her life will, at least, be safe," he said to himself. "Now that all is known, neither Mr. Luttrell nor Juanita will dare tamper with that again."

He passed a restless, feverish day, however, and when night fell his nervousness seemed to increase. Instead of leaving his office at the usual hour, he remained there long after midnight, pacing the floor with uneven steps. Just as the city clocks were striking two, someone burst unceremoniously in at the door. It was Mrs. Burt, bareheaded and breathless, her whole face contorted with wildest terror.

"Come, come!" she panted, seizing his arm. "You are wanted. Murder has been done!"

Dr. Jerome's heart seemed to stand still. He had not the strength for a single word. He followed the woman into the street, trembling like one in an ague fit.

"Poor Eloise," he thought. "Has it come to this? What an idiot I was to suffer her to return to that bad man's protection."

When he came up to the Luttrell mansion a knot of policemen was gathered about the door. He hurried past and went upstairs to the chamber he had visited so frequently during Eloise's illness. Here were more men, and the glare of light well-nigh blinded him. As he stood hesitating on the threshold, a sudden cry sounded within the room, and a girlish figure tottered forward.

"Oh, Dr. Jerome! You are here. Thank Heaven, I need a friend so much!"

It was Eloise herself. While he still stood staring at her in utter bewilderment, the poor thing suddenly stretched out her arms and fell

insensible at his feet. Some minutes elapsed before he could be made to comprehend the truth that it was Eugene Luttrell, and not Eloise, who had been murdered.

The whole story of that dreadful night was never known, though some very harrowing details came to light. It appeared that the murdered man, impelled by some secret uneasiness, perhaps, had insisted that Eloise should occupy a room in another part of the house, where Mrs. Burt could remain with her, and he had decided to sleep himself in the chamber that had once been his wife's.

Shortly after midnight the little household had been awakened by a blood-curdling cry, and on repairing to the room where Mr. Luttrell had elected to pass the night, found the unfortunate man gasping his last, with a dagger driven into his heart.

"It is her work—Juanita's," he faintly said. "I am fitly punished. The blow was intended for Eloise."

He never spoke again. On going below the servants found the street-door wide open, and the print of a woman's shoe on the stairs. The explanation seemed perfectly clear. Juanita had somehow possessed herself of the doorway, and maddened and desperate at being driven forth to make room for the wife whose place she had so wickedly schemed to usurp, the wretched creature had stolen back in the still night-time, with the fell purpose of destroying her rival with a single blow.

Unaware of the change that had been made, the unhappy woman had unwittingly murdered the man she loved. What anguish she suffered on discovering the mistake no one ever knew. She died, and her subsequent fate is involved in mystery.

Heaven is just, however, and some terrible retribution may have overtaken her as well as her unwitting victim. Dr. Jerome could only conjecture how far Eugene Luttrell himself had been guilty in the attempts to poison Eloise. The grave holds its secrets well, and this one will never be revealed. It is better so.

Two years have elapsed since that night of horror. Eloise is now the happy wife of Dr. Jerome, but she never recalls the dreadful experience that has been made the subject of this story without a shudder.

"Once I did not believe in second love," she often says, clinging closely to her husband's neck. "But I do now—I do now."

And well she may, for at last she has won a heart worth keeping—one that will love and cherish her for ever.

R. W.

#### SAYING AND DOING.

How many make a stern resolve

To strictly do their daily duty,

That like the winter's snows dissolve

When spring shines out in stately

beauty.

Who always are a-going to do,

When really they are never doing,

Like lovers who for years will sue,

But nothing comes of all their

wooing.

Yet others without talk are making

Headway, as years will swiftly fly,

Careful in all their ways, painstaking;

At blighted hopes ne'er grieve or

sigh.

These are the ones that you find doing

What others say they will but do,

The one's resolves but end in ruin,

The others live and prosper too. O. P.

You may as well back a mule up against a beehive and tell him not to kick, as to tell a woman about a wedding—and expect silence.

#### STATISTICS.

DISSOLUTIONS OF PARLIAMENT.—The month of March has witnessed many dissolutions of Parliament. In the reign of Henry VIII. there were two March dissolutions—namely on March 4, 1513, and March 29, 1544; in the reign of Edward VI. one, on March 31, 1553; in the reign of Queen Elizabeth two, on March 23, 1587, and March 29, 1589; in the reign of James I. one, on March 27, 1625; in the reign of Charles I. one, on March 10, 1629; during the Commonwealth one, on March 16, 1660; in the reign of Charles II. one, on March 23, 1681; in the reign of George I. one, on March 10, 1722; in the reign of George II. one, on March 21, 1761; in the reign of George III. two, on March 12, 1768, and March 25, 1784. The dissolution on the 24th ult. was the second that has taken place in March during the reign of our present Sovereign—the first being that of March 21, 1857.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

GREEN SAUCE FOR FOWL.—Tie the parsley in a bunch, and boil it to a fine pulp, with a pinch of soda in the water. Take off the stalks, chop the pulp, and beat in the sauce on the fire till it is mixed.

CLEANING GAS GLOVES.—Wash in cold soda water, rinse in cold water, and when dry paint it all over with spirits of salts, using a clean brush, and rinse finally.

CHEESECAKES.—Line some patty-pans with puff paste, and then fill them with the following mixture: Melt two ounces of butter, add two ounces sifted loaf sugar, the rind of two lemons grated, the juice of two lemons strained; beat well and it is ready. Bake in a moderate oven.

ORANGE MARMALADE.—Select sound Seville oranges in April and look them well over. Put them whole into a preserving pan with plenty of water, and stew them until soft, change the water two or three times. When tender pour off the water, peel off the rind, take away the pips, and weigh one pound and a half of lump sugar to every pound of pulp, with a breakfast-cupful of the water that the oranges were boiled in. Clear the syrup by boiling it for a few minutes before adding the pulp, cut the rind into thin strips, and when the pulp has simmered ten minutes add the rind and give another boil for ten minutes. Time to boil the oranges, five hours, or until tender.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

REMYENI'S three fiddles are valued at £3,000. The oldest, "The Prince," was made hundreds of years ago by Nicolo Amati. It is seldom used. The second, "The Princess," was made by a pupil of Amati—the celebrated Stradivari, and is used for concert purposes. The third instrument was made by Mr. Colton, of Brooklyn, N. Y. The work is done entirely by hand. Should Mr. C. live to be a very old man he will only be able to complete fifteen violins. Remyen calls it "The Crown Prince," and uses it for parlour playing.

A MANUSCRIPT supposed to have been written by St. Peter has lately been discovered among the property of a man named Bore, who died last year at Jerusalem, and at the age of 109. The style of the work had led to the conclusion that it is authentic, and it is stated that the London Bible Society, which has despatched a committee to the spot, has offered Bore's heirs the sum of £20,000 for its possession. The heirs, however, refuse to part with the manuscript, though it seems probable that they will allow the society to reproduce and translate it.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

GEORGE M.—If you cannot keep your own secret you ought not to complain if another tells it.

M. S.—To make orange marmalade see "Household Treasures," on previous page.

W. H. L. G.—All the remedies you say you have adopted will only result in weakening your system, and be of no avail. The doctor's advice was the best he could give you; take it.

JAMES P.—I. We believe Curzon House officers are paid weekly. 3. Respectable lodgings can be obtained not only near the Curzon House, but all over London; average rent, 3s. per week.

A SIX YEARS' SUBSCRIBER.—We have not been able to ascertain the address of Professor Skeats for you; perhaps some one of our readers can oblige with it.

LILY.—Try Lamplough's Pyrexia Saline, a very refreshing and invigorating summer drink, and well recommended as a remedy for headaches, constipation, &c.

AMELIA.—You did quite right. Under the circumstances it would have been cold and ungracious not to have thanked him.

H. M.—Nothing but persistent personal application will be of any avail.

JANE B.—To remove superfluous hair from the face saturate the skin with olive oil and let it remain an hour, then wipe it off and apply the following mixture with a brush: One ounce finely powdered quicklime, one drachm powdered orpiment; mix with the white of an egg. Perhaps this receipt would answer your purpose. Ask a chemist before using it.

AMY No. 2 & 3.—If you can prove cruelty, &c., you can obtain a divorce; but the cost would be not £10, but £30, unless you sue in forma pauperis, to do which you must first obtain a solicitor's certificate that you have good grounds for action. Armed with this, the cost would be about £5 5s.

HETTIE.—A woman may be of great assistance to her husband in business by wearing a cheerful smile continually upon her countenance. A man's perplexities and gloominess are increased a hundred-fold when his better-half moves about with a continual scowl upon her brow. A pleasant, cheerful wife is a rainbow set in the sky when her husband's mind is tossed with storms and tempests, but a dissatisfied and fretful wife in the hour of trouble is like one of those fiends appointed to torture lost spirits.

ELIZABETH has arrived at the age of twenty-three, without ever having a sweetheart. She wonders at this, because she is fond of literature, and of a serious and reflective turn of mind. We are not at all surprised, for, as gaudy colours first attract the eye, so do bold and showy women first engage the attention of the men, and it is only when too late that they find out that the brightest dyes are not the fastest. Elizabeth, with her retiring and industrious habits, is of an age when she will be more truly loved than if she had fallen into Cupid's meshes a few years earlier. The prudent mate with their equals.

FREDERICK W.—We know of a better plan than any of the three you mention. Keep on with your attentions. Do your duty, and await development. Your first plan is contingent at the best. Your second assumes that you speak falsely. Never do that. Your third would be very painful, you know, and you might lose by it a very good wife. We can hardly think she will finally throw off one who is so much in earnest, especially if she appreciates the fine English Dr. Johnson wrote.

MAUDE.—We think you were right not to marry a man you did not love. To marry in the hope that may follow is to do evil that good may come, and it does not come in that way. There is no canonical limit, having passed which one is an old maid. Sixty-five, perhaps, might be named as a rough guess. As to the doctor, the dignified way is to think no more about him. You meant no evil. If he was trifling so much the worse for him. Be patient, for if it is best for you to be married the right man will appear some time or other.

IVY and ROSE, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Ivy is nineteen, fair, of a loving disposition, domesticated. Rose is twenty, fair, fond of music and dancing, good-tempered.

ALICE and EDITH, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Alice is eighteen, fair, good-looking, tall. Edith is seventeen, medium height, fond of music. Respondents must be tall, dark, good-looking, fond of children.

AMELIA F., medium height, dark, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy, between twenty-five and thirty.

STARS and STRIPES and BLUE-EYED MAGGIE, brother and sister, would like to correspond with a lady and gentleman of good standing.

T. S., twenty-seven, medium height, would like to correspond with a lady about twenty-four, good-looking, tall.

EMILY and MAX, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Emily is domesticated, dark, fond of home. Max is nineteen, fond of home and children, tall, dark.

SILK and COTTON, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen between twenty-five and thirty with a view to matrimony. Silk is nineteen, golden hair, dark eyes, fond of music. Cotton is eighteen, brown hair, dark eyes, good-looking, tall, domesticated, and loving.

DORA and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Dora is twenty-three, dark, fond of home and children. Annie is eighteen, fond of music and dancing, fair.

ALICE, MAGGIE, and POLLY, three friends, would like to correspond with three young men with a view to matrimony. Alice is twenty-one, dark, fond of home and children. Maggie is twenty-six, of a loving disposition. Polly is twenty-two, fond of home and children.

## TO BEALDINE.

You should not murmur at your lot,  
Or deem it aught but good,  
Though I must toil with head and hands  
To earn my daily food.  
You should not fret though Fortune frown,  
Or at stern fate repine,  
Since you can say—oh, Heaven, what joy!—  
That one true heart is thine.

The gay may cast their looks of scorn  
Upon my humble garb;  
Such looks give wounds to some, for you  
They bear no point nor barb.  
You're hidden around of your breast  
That seems almost divine,  
No sneer can soothe the while you have power  
To say one heart is thine.

The rich may boast his golden store,  
You envy none mere pelf,  
But when you see it you can smile,  
And whisper to yourself,  
"Oh, joy of joys! How rich am I  
Without such wealth as thine;  
God prosper thee, and give, besides,  
Such a true heart as mine."

Now you must wait, yes, you and I,  
And work to earn a home,  
Where hands as well as hearts may join,  
But the good time will come;  
And though the waiting may be long,  
Why should you sigh or pine?  
Doubt, fear, away, for you can say  
That one true heart is thine.

H. F. H.

NANCY and MEG, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen. Nancy is twenty-two, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. Meg is twenty-three, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, thoroughly domesticated, and fond of home. Respondents must be about twenty-four.

ETHEL, VIOLET, and EMILY, three friends, would like to correspond with three young men. Ethel is tall, and of a loving disposition. Violet is dark, blue eyes, fond of music. Emily is twenty, fair.

M. G. and D. L., two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. M. G. is twenty-four, fond of dancing, dark. D. L. is twenty-one, fond of home.

LUCY and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lucy is twenty-two, dark, fond of dancing. Annie is twenty, fair, good-tempered, and fond of music and dancing.

ANGELINA, twenty, loving, medium height, hazel eyes, fond of home, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-one, dark, tall, of a loving disposition, good-looking, fond of music.

MECHANIC, fair, medium height, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty.

WILLIE M., nineteen, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age, fair, light hair, medium height, fond of home.

FANNY and POLLY, two friends, wish to correspond with two tradesmen with a view to matrimony. Fanny is twenty-two, fair, light brown hair, dark blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Polly is twenty-three, dark, black hair, blue eyes, tall, fond of home and music.

S. D. and A. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. S. D. is twenty-one, tall, dark. A. S. is twenty-two, medium height.

NELLIE and FANNY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men about twenty. Nellie is seventeen, fair, fond of music and children. Fanny is eighteen, dark, fond of home, loving.

ELIZA and SARAH, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Eliza is twenty-four, dark, fond of music and dancing. Sarah is twenty-two, medium height, dark.

JOHN and JEREMIAH, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. John is twenty-seven, good-looking, dark hair. Jeremiah is twenty-four, loving, of a loving disposition, fair, fond of music, blue eyes. Respondents must be fond of home, good-looking.

VIOLET and LILY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen about twenty-two. Violet is nineteen, dark, domesticated, fond of children, of a loving disposition. Lily is eighteen, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

CARRIE, eighteen, fond of music and dancing, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-two.

DAISY and FORGET-ME-NOT would like to correspond with two gentlemen between twenty-two and twenty-five. Daisy is twenty-three, dark, fond of home and dancing. Forget-Me-Not is twenty, fair, brown eyes, fond of home and children.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

JESSIE is responded to by—Ernest, twenty-three, tall, dark, of a loving disposition.

JONATHAN by—May, seventeen, loving, fond of music, dark, thoroughly domesticated.

JACK by—Marie, twenty, fair, fond of dancing.

TED by—Clare, nineteen, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and music.

EVA by—J. E., nineteen, tall, fair, and of a loving disposition.

IRIS by—W. L., eighteen, tall, loving, fair, fond of children.

C. G. G. by—Nellie, twenty, dark, blue eyes.

JENNIE by—H. F., twenty-six, fair, good-tempered.

B. A. by—Albert.

WALTER by—Amy, eighteen, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

HARRY by—Mabel, eighteen, fair, thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition, and fond of music and dancing.

ALBERT by—Lillie, eighteen, fair, good-looking, fond of home.

EVA by—Cage, nineteen, tall, dark.

IRIS by—Recess, twenty, fond of children, tall, dark.

ROBERT by—Florence A., twenty-one, dark brown hair, blue eyes, loving, domesticated.

ANNIE by—J. Q., twenty-one, medium height, blue eyes, fair.

MARTHA by—J. E. T., nineteen, fair, loving, medium height, fond of children.

ALICE by—J. W. M., eighteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

CLARICE by—Sidney S., twenty-four, fair, loving, and fond of children.

ELYSIE FANSON by—Maud T., eighteen, dark brown hair, brown eyes, loving, fond of home and music, and of medium height.

ALICE by—James M.

CRYPTOGRAPH by—Violet McK., nineteen, light hair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

ALBERT by—Lottie, nineteen, dark, good-looking, and domesticated.

ANNIE by—L. Y. Z., twenty-two, dark, fond of home and music.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

GEORGE M.—If you cannot keep your own secret you ought not to complain if another tells it.

M. S.—To make orange marmalade see "Household Treasures," on previous page.

W. H. L. G.—All the remedies you say you have adopted will only result in weakening your system, and be of no avail. The doctor's advice was the best he could give you; take it.

JAMES P.—I. We believe Custom House officers are paid weekly. 2. Respectable lodgings can be obtained not only near the Custom House, but all over London; average rent, 5s. per week.

A SIX YEARS' SUBSCRIBER.—We have not been able to ascertain the address of Professor Skeats for you; perhaps some one of our readers can oblige with it.

LILY.—Try Lamplough's Pyretic Saline, a very refreshing and invigorating summer drink, and well recommended as a remedy for headaches, constipation, &c.

AMELIA.—You did quite right. Under the circumstances it would have been cold and ungracious not to have thanked him.

R. M.—Nothing but persistent personal application will be of any avail.

JANE B.—To remove superfluous hair from the face saturate the skin with olive oil and let it remain an hour, then wipe it off and apply the following mixture with a brush: One ounce fine powdered quicklime, one drachm powdered orpiment; mix with the white of an egg. Perhaps this receipt would answer your purpose. Ask a chemist before using it.

AMY NO. 2 & 3.—If you can prove cruelty, &c., you can obtain a divorce; but the cost would be not £10, but £30, unless you sue in forma pauperis, to do which you must first obtain a solicitor's certificate that you have good grounds for action. Armed with this, the cost would be about £5 ss.

HELVIE.—A woman may be of great assistance to her husband in business by wearing a cheerful smile continually upon her countenance. A man's perplexities and gloominess are increased a hundred-fold when his better-half moves about with a continual scowl upon her brow. A pleasant, cheerful wife is a rainbow set in the sky when her husband's mind is tossed with storms and tempests, but a dissatisfied and fretful wife in the hour of trouble is like one of those fiends appointed to torture lost spirits.

ELIZABETH has arrived at the age of twenty-three, without ever having a sweetheart. She wonders at this, because she is fond of literature, and of a serious and reflective turn of mind. We are not at all surprised, for, as gaudy colours first attract the eye, so do bold and showy women first engage the attention of the men, and it is only when too late that they find out that the brightest dyes are not the fastest. Elizabeth, with her retiring and industrious habits, is of an age when she will be more truly loved than if she had fallen into Cupid's meshes a few years earlier. The prudent mate with her equals.

FREDERICK W.—We know of a better plan than any of the three you mention. Keep on with your attentions. Do your duty, and await development. Your first plan is contingent at the best. Your second assumes that you speak falsely. Never do that. Your third would be very painful, you know, and you might lose by it a very good wife. We can hardly think she will finally throw off one who is so much in earnest, especially if she appreciates the fine English Dr. Johnson wrote.

MAUDE.—We think you were right not to marry a man you did not love. To marry in the hope that may follow is to do evil that good may come, and it does not come in that way. There is no canonical limit, having passed which one is an old maid. Sixty-five, perhaps, might be named as a rough guess. As to the doctor, the dignified way is to think no more about him. You meant no evil. If he was trifling so much the worse for him. Be patient, for if it is best for you to be married the right man will appear some time or other.

IVY and ROSE, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Ivy is nineteen, fair, of a loving disposition, domesticated. Rose is twenty, fair, fond of music and dancing, good-tempered.

ALICE and EDITH, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Alice is eighteen, fair, good-looking, tall. Edith is seventeen, medium height, fond of music. Respondents must be tall, dark, good-looking, fond of children.

AMELIA P., medium height, dark, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy, between twenty-five and thirty.

STARS and STRIPES and BLUE-EYED MAGGIE, brother and sister, would like to correspond with a lady and gentleman of good standing.

T. S., twenty-seven, medium height, would like to correspond with a lady about twenty-four, good-looking, tall.

EMILY and MAR, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Emily is domesticated, dark, fond of home. May is nineteen, fond of home and children, tall, dark.

SILK and COTTON, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen between twenty-five and thirty with a view to matrimony. Silk is nineteen, golden hair, dark eyes, fond of music. Cotton is eighteen, brown hair, dark eyes, good-looking, tall, domesticated, and loving.

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## TO GERALDINE.

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You've hidden armour o'er your breast  
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No sneer can scathe while you have power  
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But when you see it you can smile,  
And whisper to yourself,  
"Oh, joy of joys! How rich am I  
Without such wealth as thine;  
God prosper thee, and give, beside,  
Such a true heart as mine."

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MECHANIC, fair, medium height, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty.

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VIOLET and LILY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen about twenty-two. Violet is nineteen, dark, domesticated, fond of children, of a loving disposition. Lily is eighteen, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

CARRIE, eighteen, fond of music and dancing, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-two.

DAISY and FORGET-ME-NOT, would like to correspond with two gentlemen between twenty-two and twenty-five. Daisy is twenty-three, dark, fond of home and dancing. Forget-Me-Not is twenty, fair, brown eyes, fond of home and children.

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JACK by—Marie, twenty, fair, fond of dancing.

TED by—Clare, nineteen, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and music.

EVE by—J. E., nineteen, tall, fair, and of a loving disposition.

IRENE by—W. L., eighteen, tall, loving, fair, fond of children.

C. G. G. by—Nellie, twenty, dark, blue eyes.

JESSIE by—H. F., twenty-six, fair, good-tempered.

B. A. by—Albert.

WALTER by—Amy, eighteen, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

HARRY by—Mabel, eighteen, fair, thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition, and fond of music and dancing.

ALBERT by—Lillie, eighteen, fair, good-looking, fond of home.

EVA by—Cage, nineteen, tall, dark.

IRENE by—Recess, twenty, fond of children, tall, dark.

ROBERT by—Florence A., twenty-one, dark brown hair, blue eyes, loving, domesticated.

ANNIE by—J. Q., twenty-one, medium height, blue eyes, fair.

MARTHA by—J. E. T., nineteen, fair, loving, medium height, fond of children.

ALICE by—J. W. M., eighteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

CLARICE by—Sidney S., twenty-four, fair, loving, and fond of children.

FLYING GIBBON by—Maud T., eighteen, dark brown hair, brown eyes, loving, fond of home and music, and of medium height.

ALICE by—James M.

CRYPTOGRAPH by—Violet McK., nineteen, light hair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

ALBERT by—Lottie, nineteen, dark, good-looking, and domesticated.

ANNIE by—X. Y. Z., twenty-two, dark, fond of home and music.

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Of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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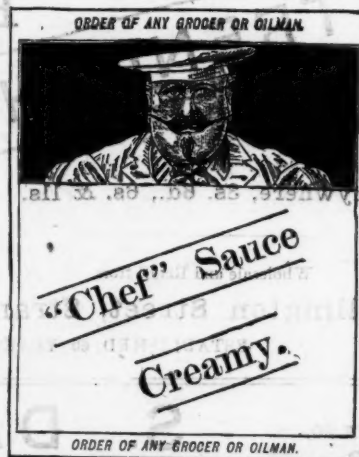
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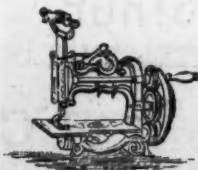
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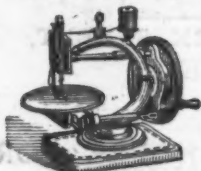
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PART 209, VOL. XXXIV.--APRIL, 1880.

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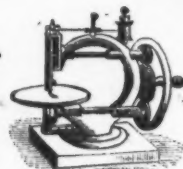
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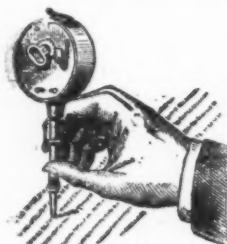
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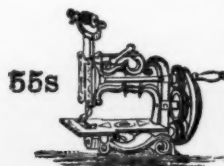
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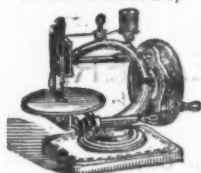
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